

September 1980

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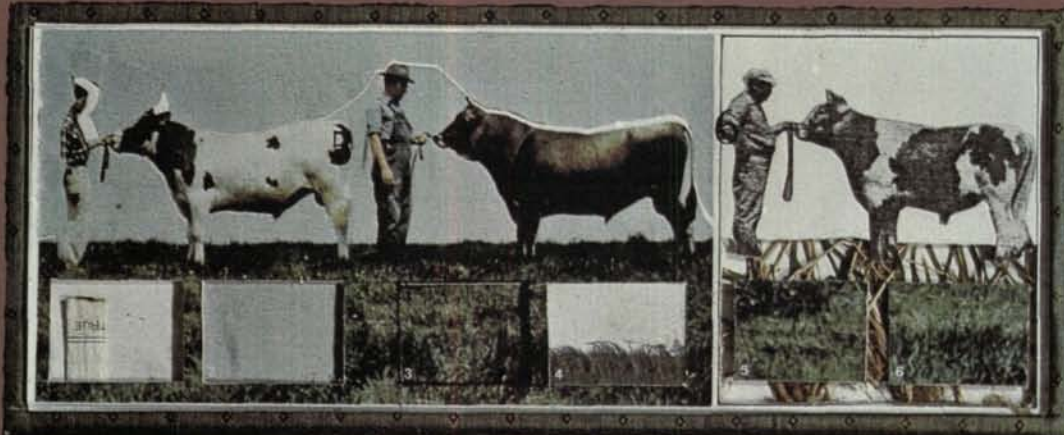
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REVIEW



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Wild Should Wild Remain.

"Man always kills the thing he loves, and so we the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in."

ALDO LEOPOLD

"Integrity is wholeness, the greatest beauty is organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man apart from that...."

ROBINSON JEFFERS

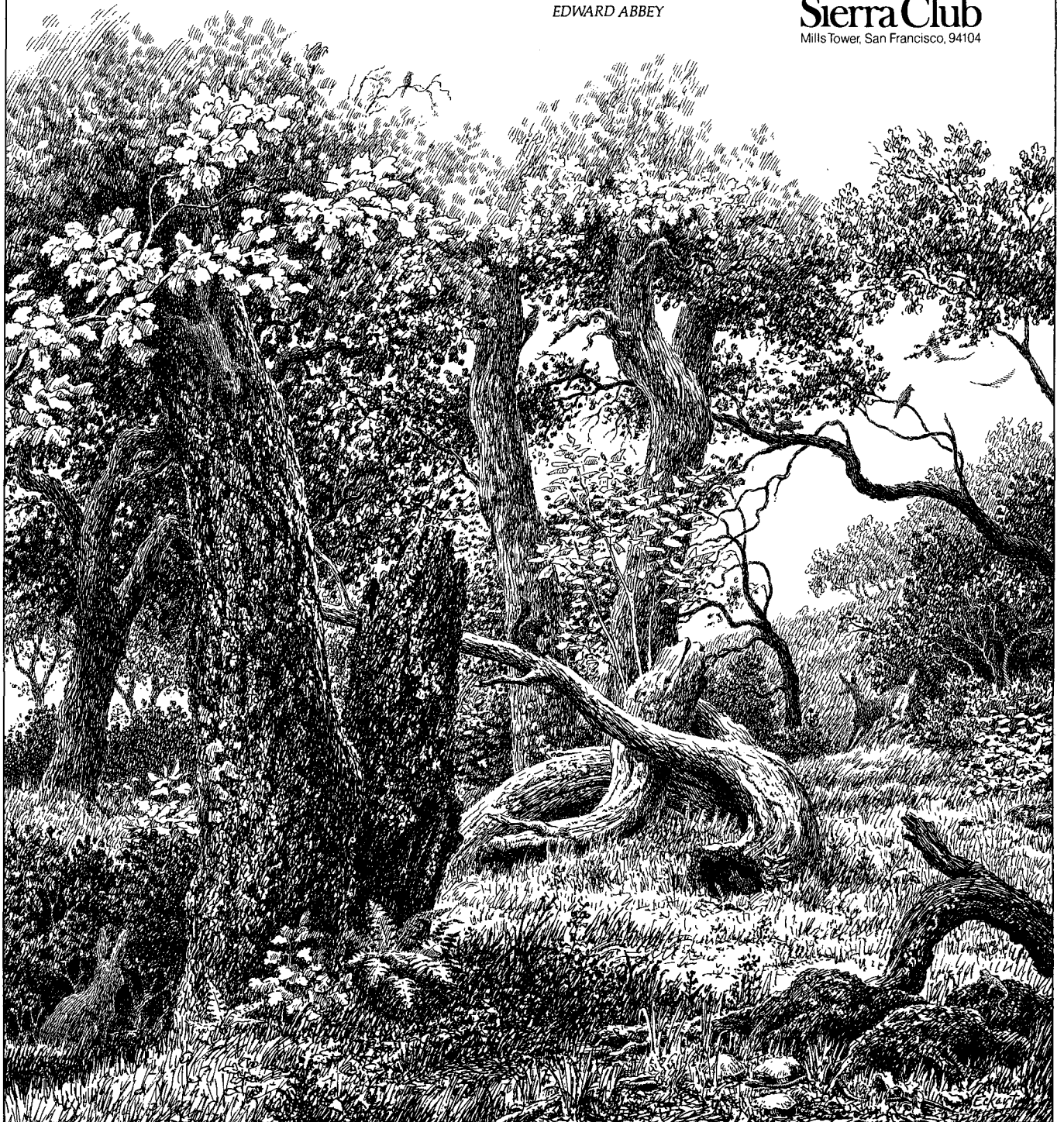
"The love of wilderness is more than a hunger for what is always beyond reach; it is also an expression of loyalty to the earth, (the earth which bore us and sustains us), the only home we shall ever know, the only paradise we ever need—if only we had the eyes to see."

EDWARD ABBEY

"We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds... It is important to us... simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as an idea."

WALLACE STEGNER

Sierra Club
Mills Tower, San Francisco, 94104





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My first encounter with an enlightened Zennist took place twenty-five years ago at his temple in the mountains south of Niigata in Japan. I knew little of Zen, but found myself responding with increasing warmth to its arts. I had gone to an exhibit of the priest's ceramics in Niigata, where I lectured on literature at the university, and was greatly taken by their purity and vigor. Asking about him, I was informed that his temple was in the mountains some fifteen miles from the city. Soon I was able to arrange a visit.

On a bright Saturday morning in autumn, accompanied by two of my students—Yoshiki, whom I often think of, wondering where life has taken him, and Hiroshi, now a teacher and lifelong friend—I took a bus to the nearest stop, some miles from the temple. We went on foot up a path two hours deep into forests flaming with pine and maple, occasionally passing a farmer or woodsman startled at the sight of a foreigner (I was told later that I was probably the first ever to walk that path). Finally we reached the temple, before which was a garden thick with vegetables piled up in the sun. The priest, bent over a spade, shouted a greeting, bowed, said he would join us before long.

To the right of the old tile-roofed temple was a small kiln, a dozen recently fired pots, and to its side crouching beside baskets some farmers who, we later learned, had come to mull over plans for a coming festival with the priest and his wife, bringing gifts of rice and mushrooms. We joined them, amused by their good-natured laughter at the sight of such a stranger, their exclamations over the brightly packaged sweet beancakes we had brought. Finally the priest approached and, brushing earth from his hands, called to his wife to bring out tea for all. He chatted with his visitors—clearly a joyous occasion.

Soon he turned his attention to us, warmly insisting that we stay at the temple overnight. We gladly accepted, then followed to the kiln where he replaced new-fired pots. Every word and gesture flowed, unhurried, as if he had known us always and was genuinely pleased that we had come. We spent the day walking in all directions, gathering fallen

Zen Literature:

Wasting Not, Wanting Not

nuts, and in the evening, after the chanted service and the sounding bell, we feasted on sweet pickles, rice and vegetables served by his wife, clearly proud that strangers had come from far Niigata to meet her husband. Then came our chance to really talk with him.

For one seeming so cut off from worldly matters, he was exceptionally informed in the arts, speaking easily, with much enthusiasm of ceramics, painting and, when he became aware of my interest, poetry. He spoke of great Zen poets, about whom I knew next to nothing, and to my surprise of certain foreign writers in whom he had a strong interest, among them Whitman and Thoreau. He asked what was felt about them these days, whether I was teaching their works at the university. Impressed with the acuteness and boldness of his judgment, I began asking about Zen, his life as priest and artist. What he told me, his very manner, convinced me I would have to set about learning as much as possible about a philosophy which could inspire such a life, make a man content with his place, however obscure, and his work among people for whom he obviously cared deeply.

The visit left an extraordinary impression. Home again, sipping tea from the superb bowl he made for me—I still count it among my prized possessions—I began making plans. Soon I was inquiring seriously into Zen, reading everything available, and for my own pleasure and en-

LUCIEN STRYK is editor of *Zen: Poems, Prayers, Sermons, Anecdotes, Interviews (Swallow)*. This is the introduction to a new edition (Spring 1981) of that book.

lightenment making very tentative translations of some of its literature, particularly poetry. I visited temples and monasteries, meeting masters and priests throughout the country, and most important of all began to meditate. I sensed most strongly that I had found something which could make a difference to my future. The intuition proved right; that encounter in the mountains was among the most important of my life.

2

Japanese Zen poems, written by masters, priests and laymen since the thirteenth century, are for the most part simple and highly suggestive. Rarely is a poem beyond understanding, though to be sure there is often symbolic content requiring explanation. The poets rarely wrote about their poems, for very good reason: to them poetry—for that matter any art—was not something to be cultivated but a means to self-judgment and gauge of spiritual growth. Often a poem was composed as response to a *koan* (problem for meditation) set by a master, such as, "Describe the face you had before you were born." Some of the finest poems have resulted from struggles with such problems. When Daito succeeded in solving the eighth *koan*—about Master Unmon—of the *Hekiganroku*, an ancient collection of problems, he wrote for his master's approval:

*At last I've broken Unmon's barrier!
There's exit everywhere—east, west;
north, south.
In at morning, out at evening; neither
host nor guest.
My every step stirs up a little breeze.*

"Joshu's Nothingness," one of the koans first given disciples, is a source of many poems. When Saisho felt illuminated, he wrote:

*Earth, mountains, rivers—hidden in this
nothingness.
In this nothingness—earth, mountains,
rivers revealed.
Spring flowers, winter snows:
There's no being nor non-being, nor denial
itself.*

Such poems gave graphic proof of the breakthrough to awakening, thus became objects of meditation—

important as the koans which inspired them—for generations on the harsh path to enlightenment.

Rarely in the history of religion has art played so fruitful a role, however emphatic the disclaimers of many Zen practitioners. Shinkichi Takahashi, Japan's most celebrated contemporary Zen poet, wrote: "As a follower of the tradition of Zen, which is above verbalization, I must confess that I feel ashamed of writing poems or having collections of them published in book form." This echo of Lao Tzu in the Taoist classic *Tao Teh Ching*—"He who knows does not speak"—heard often in Zen communities, must not be taken lightly. Zen came as the result of the fortunate merging in sixth century China of Taoism and Buddhism, and is still rooted in Taoism. There is the exemplary unbroken wall-facing meditation of its first patriarch Bodhidharma, for example, and the numerous anecdotes about the power of the unspoken:

Butei, Emperor of Ryo, sent for Fu-daishi to explain the Diamond Sutra. On the appointed day Fu-daishi came to the palace, mounted a platform, rapped the table before him, then descended and, still not speaking, left.

Butei sat motionless for some minutes, whereupon Shiko, who had seen all that happened, went up to him and said, "May I be so bold, sir, as to ask whether you understood?"

The Emperor sadly shook his head. "What a pity!" Shiko exclaimed. "Fu-daishi has never been more eloquent."

Yet Zen is the least solemn of Buddhist schools, and sometimes is caught spitting on itself—with glee. In the following anecdote, well-known as the preceding, the self-mockery is compelling:

A self-proclaimed Master of Silence had in attendance at all times two eloquent disciples. Never uttering a word himself, he was ever inscrutable. One day while his disciples were out he was visited by a pilgrim, whose first question was, "What is the Buddha?" In his confusion Master of Silence looked around in all directions for the disciples. Satisfied at his "answer," the pilgrim went on to ask other questions, and each silent response, accompanied by strange looks and gestures, more than satisfied his curiosity. He left the Master to set out again on his journey, meeting the two disciples on the way. He was full of enthusiasm. "When I asked him," he said, "what Buddha is, he immediately turned his face in all directions, implying that humans are always looking for Buddha—

but actually he is not to be sought in such a way. And his answers to my other questions were even more impressive—what a remarkable master!" When the disciples returned, the Master of Silence cried out, "Where have you been? Some crazy pilgrim has been driving me mad with impossible questions!"

Muga, the state of mind in which one identifies with an object without any sense of restraint, is achieved only by the enlightened like Bunan:

*The moon's the same old moon,
The flowers exactly as they were,
Yet I've become the thingness
Of all the things I see!*

The moon, as here, is a common symbol. It should be borne in mind that Zen, however extraordinary it appears, is very much a school of Mahayana Buddhism, and that like all Buddhists the Zennist searches within for the indivisible moon, reflected not only by the waves but each dew drop. Always Zen is to be found, if at all, in immediate experience, the firefly rather than the star.

To discover the Buddha-nature (*Dharmakaya*) anywhere, is for the Zennist to find his own nature, and whether designated so or not most Zen poems are satori poems. But there is another type of poem which is unique in world literature, the death poem, traditionally written or dictated just before death. The Zennist looks back on his life and, steeled by necessity, expresses in a few terse lines his very being. These are among the best known:

*Magnificent! Magnificent!
No one knows the final word.
The ocean bed's aflame,
Out of the void leap wooden lambs.
—Fumon*

*Riding this wooden upside-down horse,
I'm about to gallop through the void.
Would you seek to trace me?
Ha! Try catching the tempest in a net.
—Kukoku*

*The void has collapsed upon the earth,
Stars, burning, shoot across Iron Mountain.
Turning a somersault, I brush past.
—Zekkai*

The void, mentioned in all the poems, is Zen's great Penetralium: the mind is a void in which objects, stripped of their objectivity, are reduced to essence. In this death poem there is another important symbol, the ox, object of discipline.

*For seventy-two years
I've kept the ox well under.
Today, the plum in bloom again,
I let him wander in the snow.
—Bokuo*

Bokuo, in his stoic acceptance, proves himself a true Zen-man.

Though satori and death are constants, many Zen poems deal with nature and man's place in it. The Buddha-nature is not man's alone, it is discoverable in all that exists, animate or inanimate. Perhaps in this poem by Genko it is perfectly caught:

*Unaware of illusion or enlightenment,
From this stone I watch the mountains,
hear the stream.
A three-day rain has cleansed the earth,
A roar of thunder split the sky.
Ever serene are linked phenomena,
And though the mind's alert, it's but an ash heap.
Chilly, bleak as the dusk I move through,
I return, a basket brimmed with peaches on my arm.*

3

Zen sermons are unlike those of any other religion, whatever the master's sect—Rinzai, which stresses sudden enlightenment, Soto, which maintains that gradually perfected meditation is equal to enlightenment, or Obaku, which has more in common with Rinzai, practicing rigorous *zazen* (formal meditation) and employing koan, though the chanting of the *Nembutsu* (invocation of the Bodhisattva Amida) is also engaged in by this sect. The purpose of the sermon is less to uphold what is vaguely thought the ethical life than to point directly at awakening. It is assumed by masters that those present at *teisho* (sermons) are morally upright, and that what they seek is a radical way of viewing themselves in the world. Sometimes the sermons, invariably brief, are more like demonstrations. The following report, by a disciple, of a *teisho* by the modern master Joko Shaku on the Chinese poet Sotoba's satori poem is illuminating.

The master began by reciting the famous poem, which he said had been written by the layman Sotoba nearly 1000 years ago:

*The mountain—Buddha's body.
The torrent—his preaching.
Last night, eighty-four thousand poems.
How, how make them understand?*

After analyzing the poem, the master

said that its most important words were "mountain" and "torrent." With growing interest, he continued, "Which of the two words is more important? Of course, "torrent." What's the sound of the torrent Sotoba heard at Rozan? Zaa-zaa-zaa—the sound fills the universe!" After pausing, he went on, "Good. Then is the torrent alone the Buddha's profound teaching?" He paused again. "Oh, I forgot about the mountain. What's the mountain?" He looked around slowly, then said, "I'll have to let you see it." He then turned down his eyelid with a finger, saying, "Do you see any green in my left eye?" With that he got up and left.

In spite of similarity in the masters' aims, whatever the sect, the sermons are as individual as they themselves. Bankei-Eitaku is a good example:

The only thing I tell my people is to stay in the Buddha-mind. There are no regulations, no formal discipline. Nevertheless they have agreed among themselves to sit in Zen for a period of two incense sticks [an hour or so] daily. All right, let them. But they should understand that the birthless Buddha-mind has absolutely nothing to do with sitting with an incense stick burning in front of you. If one keeps in the Buddha-mind without straying, there's no further satori to seek.

Great masters are as vital in their sermons as in all else, and some, like Shozan, a *samurai* (warrior) until he joined the priesthood in his forty-fifth year, are daringly iconoclastic:

Unfortunately Buddhism has declined, going from bad to worse, with the result that most are milksops, critically lacking in vigor. Only the valorous can train properly, the ignorant being mild and sanctimonious, mistaken in the belief that such is the way of Buddhist practice. Then there are the madmen who go about trumpeting their attainment of satori—a bagatelle. Myself, I'm a stranger to sanctimoniousness and satorishness, my sole aim being to conquer all with a vivacious mind.

The historical continuity of the sermon, from earliest Chinese examples to the most recent Japanese, is possibly due to the fact that when compared with other Buddhist schools, Zen has been able to absorb—at moments seemingly thrive on—shifts and upheavals in politics and culture normally bringing about changes in religion and philosophy. Not unexpected, perhaps,

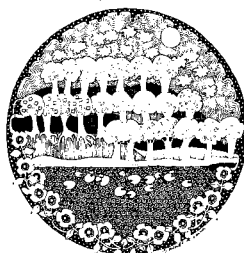
considering its avowed purpose to make it possible for man, whatever the challenge, to remain centered in his Buddha-nature—as true today as 1500 years ago.

4

Often Zen anecdotes concern confrontations between masters and disciples, and at times the disciple is shown "besting" his master:

Pointing to the sea, Master Kangan said to his disciple Daichi: "You speak of mind over matter—well, let's see you stop those boats from sailing." Without a word the young disciple pulled the shoji (screen) across their view. "Hah," the master smiled and placed the shoji in position again. "But you had to use your hands!" Still without a word, Daichi then closed his eyes.

For the most part, however, the disciple is very much put in his place: Once a tyro asked his master, "What is the First Principle?" Without hesitation the master replied, "If I were to tell you, it would become the Second Principle!" Such anecdotes—and they are many—are chiefly responsible for Zen's appeal to those not normally aware of philosophy, yet are capable of responding, if it is made palatable, to "wisdom litera-



ture." The best anecdotes share with good jokes of a certain order a degree of compactness and point found in only the finest writing. For many it is Zen's nonchalance which gives its greatest appeal. The popularity of the anecdote began with Taoism, particularly in the illustrious Chuang Tzu, who was born in central China around 300 B.C. and became the toughest opponent of convention-ridden Confucianism. He maintained, in sayings like the following, that the best action is inaction:

The operations of Heaven and Earth proceed with the most admirable order, yet they never speak. The four seasons observe clear laws, but they do not discuss them. All of nature is regulated by exact principles, but it never explains them. The sage penetrates the mystery of the order of Heaven and Earth, and comprehends the princi-

ples of nature. Thus the perfect man does nothing, and the great sage originates nothing. That is to say, they merely contemplate the universe.

Such sayings, uncompromising, unequivocal, greatly troubled Chuang Tzu's Confucian contemporaries, who were bitter in condemnation of what they understood to be Taoist indifference, if not hostility, to social order. It is equally a Western misconception that practitioners of disciplines like Zen are "quietists" turned from the world. So they are, to be sure, while in training, and are better for the experience when fully turned round again, self-discovered and ready as never before to respond to the world at its roughest. Surely Shinkichi Takahashi was not facing a wall when, moved to compassionate response by the news of a fellow Buddhist's self-immolation in protest against the Vietnam war, he wrote "Burning Oneself to Death":

That was the best moment of the monk's life

*Firm on a pile of firewood
With nothing more to say, hear, see,
Smoke wrapped him, his folded hands
blazed.*

*There was nothing more to do, the end
Of everything. He remembered, as a
cool breeze
Streamed through him, that one is
always
In the same place, and that there is no
time.*

*Suddenly a whirling mushroom cloud
rose
Before his singed eyes, and he was a
mass
Of flame. Globes, one after another,
rolled out,
The delighted sparrows flew round like
fire balls.*

The sense of Chuang Tzu's saying is not that one should avoid acting, but that one should not act contrary to nature—one must not strain. In an anecdote like the following the lesson is driven home:

Kato-Dewanokami-Yasuoki, lord of Osu in the province of Iyo, was passionate about the military arts. One day the great master Bankei called on him and, as they sat face to face, the young lord grasped his spear and made as if to pierce Bankei. But the master silently flicked his head aside with his rosary and said, "No good. You're too worked up." Years later Yasuoki, who had become a great spearsman, spoke of Bankei as the one who had taught him most about the art.

The main purpose of the anecdote, often used in a master's *teisho*, is—very much like the koan—to jerk the unenlightened from a state of hebetude, induced by convention, and make it possible to experience awakening. Many of the anecdotes, as we have seen, are very old, drawn from works like the ancient collection of stories with commentaries, *Hekiganroku* (Blue Cliff Record), another Chinese book, the early thirteenth-century *Mu-mon-kan* (Barrier without Gate), and the late thirteenth-century Japanese work *Shaseki-shu* (Stone and Sand Collection). There are some anecdotes quite serious in tone, their purpose being to illustrate important Buddhist ideals:

When wolves were discovered in the village near Master Shoji's temple, he entered the graveyard nightly for all of one week and sat in Zen. Strangely enough, that put a stop to the wolves' prowling. Overjoyed, the villagers asked him to describe the secret rites he had performed. "I didn't resort to such things," he said, "nor could I have done so. While I was in zazen a number of wolves gathered around me, licking the tip of my nose, sniffing my windpipe. They did all sorts of silly things. But because I remained in the right state of mind, I wasn't bitten. As I keep preaching to you, the proper state of mind will make it possible for you to be free in life and death, invulnerable to fire and water. Even wolves are powerless against it. I simply tried to practice what I preach."

For the most part, however, the anecdotes are farcical, illogical, and highly paradoxical. Whether its purpose is to amuse, shock or edify, or do all three together like this one, greatly condensed, the story speaks for itself:

Two monks were walking by the stream near their temple, when one spotted a leaf of lettuce floating downstream. "Master Gizan (abbot of a monastery a mile upstream) has become a wastrel, I'm afraid." The other nodded and sighed. Suddenly Master Gizan burst, panting, from a clump of bushes ahead and plunged into the stream for the lettuce-leaf. The monks bowed low, and walked on.

5

Zen interviews are conducted in ways somewhat different from Western dialogues, the unspoken often held to be as important as what is said, meaning deduced from gesture, expression, the very atmosphere. In

RICHARD TERRILL

FROM

Twelve years ago I was twelve.
I watched the angles of blue swallows, perfect as water.
Ferns and low shrubs scratched green on my arms and face.
My father's pocket compass lay comfortably
in his hand at my chin.

Today I climbed from a meadow to cool redwoods.
At noon a river, and the ocean was a backdrop always.
I never remember much I see:
a shriek at evening is maybe a blackbird,
quails drum to safety.
I imagine this the middle of my life
to someday remember more than actually was
—in wildflowers, gathering wood.
I imagine the center goes on from here,
mistakes me for where I've been.

Zen communities *mondo* (rapid exchanges) are thought reliable evidence of progress (or stagnation), and are frequently engaged in. Unlike dialogue in the Socratic tradition, in which the dominant party defends a viewpoint, Zen dialogue is at all times intensely exploratory, the participants tested at every turn—not viewpoint, but self. This gives an edge, a thrust, which can be bracing, and revealing.

It is revelation which, at all times, is sought, and this accounts for the gravity of Zen dialogues, held for the most part between an enlightened master and either a disciple or one intrigued by the possibility of gaining rare insight. As one who has interviewed Zennists over the years—masters, craftsmen, artists, Noh actors—I can testify to astonishing depths of realization. The nature of the quest demands openness, largeness of vision, and in the most fruitful encounters there is palpable expansion. The master Tenzan Yasuda, for example, in a discussion of art, after describing the effect on him of a painting by the great painter—and fellow Zennist—Sesshu, "Fisherman and Woodcutter": "To be sure,

Western art has volume and richness when it is good. Yet to me it is too thickly encumbered by what is dispensable. It's as if the Western artist were trying to hide something, not reveal it." Whether or not one finds such judgment reasonable—perhaps few Westerners would—the comment, hardly meant to provoke, is deeply interesting.

6

I have attempted to give an account of Zen literature, but of course it must speak for itself. Its poems, prayers, sermons and anecdotes have had for fifteen centuries an exalted purpose, to guide the seeker to enlightenment. Whether or not that most elusive goal is attained, the lover of its literature is bound to be touched by Zen's true spirit. He may even find himself feeling on occasion what Bunan, writing in the seventeenth century, once felt—

*When you're both alive and dead,
Thoroughly dead to yourself,
How superb
The smallest pleasure!*

—Lucien Stryk

Harper's Magazine. *Rescued by Foundations. Charity. As with most charity it is not healthful, but we'll take it because we can't afford the alternative. The U.S. can't afford to lose one of its few remaining national magazines of authentic seriousness. We can't afford any more losses to the Yahoos, to the accountants, to the sunbelt trivializing of life, to the masturbatory daze of television watching.*

1. Heaven and Hell

Cedar Street ran downhill from West Main into Lake. Everybody called it a short street but it led into two really different places. At the top, across West Main, was Walnut Hill park, the monument straight up the hill from Cedar. I didn't go there. I went off to the right and then left, up the black road into the park that led to the tennis courts. But first it led to the refreshment stand, a dark green wooden stand with (I counted) eight different sides, all open, and boards running around it like a porch. They sold Lash's root beer, but it wasn't my family. Again and again I'd dream how it would be if it *was* my family. They also had Orange Crush and frozen Milky Ways. Especially frozen Milky Ways, which I'd learned about at Momauguin, where my aunt and uncle had a cottage on the beach. There you had to cross a kind of brook with planks over it to get to the shack that sold the frozen Milky Ways. They really froze them, the way they have to be to be right, so hard that when you bang them on a table or a rock they break into pieces. You put a piece in your mouth and before you can really chew it the chocolate begins to melt. You keep testing, and then when the piece is just softening a bit you begin to chew down, mix the caramel up with the inside. Then finally it all comes together and your mouth mixes it up with water, and there it is.

At the bottom, at Lake Street, was a lake. I didn't hook that up for a long time, because it wasn't a lake to me, it wasn't like any lake I ever saw. This one had factories around two sides of it, the Stanley Works and something else. And it was always steaming. Steam rose right up from it. It was scary but I never said so, otherwise they mightn't let me go to

Early Learning Modules

the barber shop alone. The barber shop was on Myrtle Street. You went down Cedar to Lake, turned right (my aunt was a schoolteacher; she gave me a ring for my right hand when I was a kid), went along Lake and turned left across the railroad tracks. Here were factories on all sides of you, red brick with dirty windows you couldn't see through. There were never any people in sight. You could hear the machines when the windows were open up above, and you could always smell that kind of hot smell. Fafnir Ball Bearings. Fafnir was a dragon. I ran across his picture. Why would anyone name a factory after a dragon? For that matter, I was reading King Arthur all the time, and that steamy lake on Lake Street reminded me of the lake where the Lady lived, where Arthur goes to die, though it wasn't anything like the same thing.

The tennis courts were the place to be. Everybody was there. Not so much kids my age, but everybody else. Stan Perkowski and Valentine and Jack Kimball, the champions. Koplowitz with the funny forehand. Married people. There were trees along the side of the four courts. You could sit under them and talk, listen, watch the games. And play sometimes. Even a kid could call up the Park Department and reserve a court. You'd get there the next morning and there it was, the piece of paper tacked to a board. 8-9: Lash. My father gave me most of the money for my tennis racquet because he and my mother were always going out at night and he'd give me some money while they stood at the door and said goodnight. The maid's boyfriend gave me the rest.

Walnut Hill was a real hill, up above the town. It was cool up there, green, kind of fresh smelling. Just the opposite of what it was on Lake Street, which was hardly in this world anyway. I was looking at some books

at my grandfather's, and there was one full of brown pictures of World War I with people in gas masks and lying around in the mud. In another book there was a picture of Hell, with a lot of snakes and smoke. Nobody talked about Hell around my house. Sometimes the other kids talked about it. The picture reminded me of Lake Street. No, it was the other way around. Lake Street reminded me of the picture. I began to go to the barber shop in the car with my father when I had to have a haircut. He had a La Salle. A V-12.

2. The Judge

My parents were very proud of knowing The Judge. He lived in Hartford, and came to our house rarely, only once that I remember. By the tone of their voices when they brought me in to him I knew they were showing him off. I couldn't know, at eight and in the constant shadow of my dumb brother, that they were also showing me off to him. The Judge, of course, was no stranger to shyness. He knew where to begin. In my case he selected prizefighting. It wasn't especially acute, since of the three real fights I hadn't run away from I'd lost two and had one draw. But he was talking newspaper and radio stuff, sports, The Big Event. The great Dempsey vs. Tunney fight was coming up. Nobody was dumb enough not to know about that, and no kid of even approximate normality wouldn't have chosen a favorite, like with the Athletics vs. the Cubs.

Ours was a Dempsey neighborhood. Maybe that's why I chose Tunney. Also I'd seen Dempsey on Pathé newsreel, and he scared me. The Judge asked me why I thought Tunney would win. I'd heard one of the big guys at the drugstore say that Tunney was an expert boxer. "He's an expert boxer," I'm said to have said. Evidently The Judge expected me to say something like "because," or choose Dempsey because he was the unthinking kid's favorite. Anyway, he was impressed. I was released from the room and told later by my parents, in the hushed tones that meant seriousness, that The Judge was impressed by my ability in argument, that he thought I'd make an excellent lawyer.

STAMP! Nine years later, as a university freshman, I opted for a full year of both economics and accounting to begin my presumed course in pre-law. It almost killed me. Only a long count by my economics professor saved me at the June bell.

I detest the general practices of law. Probably have since I was eight.

Postscript: My father, who like Dempsey was called Jack, went to the great fight, bet on him, and lost a bundle.

3. The Truth of Tales

I read a lot when I was eight and nine. Nothing beyond my years, but a lot. I'd walk anywhere to borrow or swap books. After I dried up my neighborhood I'd ask kids at school and go to their neighborhoods. (The library was downtown, too far.) I remember to this day the feeling of walking home with a pile of ten *Boy Allies* and *Tom Swifts* that a strange kid, Gordon Schilling, gave me when I turned up at his house. I've known the feeling since. Greedy. Hot. Secretive. I got them home and put them in the garage. Then I went to the drugstore and bought ten licorice whips and stole a nickel cigar. I didn't know the word orgy and would have laughed at the sound of it, but that's what I had after pulling down the door of the garage. And I got as sick as any grownup.

I read all the hero stories I could get. They came in series. After reading a series, I'd go back and read *King Arthur* again and *Robin Hood*. I never stopped reading them, rooting against the Sheriff of Nottingham and Mordred. (Today I read old-fashioned detective stories, and suspect that underneath my great expanse of sophistication, deeper even than my understanding, runs the forked and perfectly clear-flowing stream of good and evil, with myself at the fork, hopping madly up and down, urging traffic to the right.)

I no longer read the fairy tales, but I knew them, I knew every one of them and could tell you how they went if you asked me. So I must have kept thinking about them. And they must have been unsettling. We lived near woods and I remember being anxious about them, never going very far in.

I don't any longer remember how I met Mrs. O'Dell. That's the way I spelled it in my mind. She was

(seemed?) an old woman with a wart on her chin who lived at the end of a lane. I knew the lane because it was in my neighborhood and we played marbles there, the dirt was right for it. But that was up near the street, not back where she lived. Her house was kind of yellow, pretty small, you could hardly see it through the trees. I never saw her come out of it. Not ever. So how did I get in? And why alone? I don't know. I don't know, but I did. I don't see myself going in there the first time, I only see myself *there*. As if at certain moments I was just *there*. And it was always the same inside, and always the same things happening.

It was dark in her house, had to be under all those trees. The chairs and lamps weren't like ours—round glass lamps, some of them pink, standing on statues; chairs all of wood, kind of straight except a big rocker with black wood and carvings. And there were rugs all over, round ones with lines of different colors running in circles from the center. I'd never seen rugs like that before. They were rag rugs. Mrs. O'Dell made them. She made rugs from rags. I never said that around but I asked my mother for some rags once to give Mrs. O'Dell—my mother wouldn't have known her—but didn't get much.

In that house I'm first sitting at the kitchen table eating custard. I didn't like custard, it was always watery at the bottom. She made it in little cups, with cinammon on top. I never told her I didn't like it much. In fact, I don't remember talking to her at all. Instead I remember that she never asked me to wash my hands or keep my elbows off the table. She never asked me about my family or how I liked school or about my friends. I ate the custard. Then we'd go into the other room with the rugs and lamps, and she'd give me molasses candy. She made it herself. In the form we called kisses, with wax paper wrapped around each one. It was good, dark and chewy. I'd eat some there, and she'd give me some for my pockets, and I'd leave. She didn't tell me when to come back. From time to time I'd just go there. And then she moved, or died. I didn't know, the other kids didn't know. When I told them she made rugs out of rags, they hooted. For weeks after whenever I showed up for a game they'd holler, "Here comes old Rug Rags."

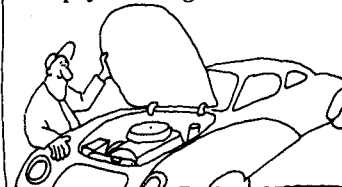
—Kenneth Lash

HOW TO GET BETTER MILEAGE FROM YOUR CAR...

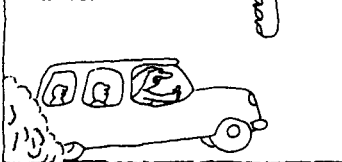
Obey the 55 mph speed limit.



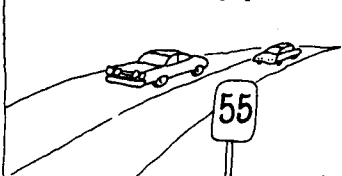
Keep your engine tuned.



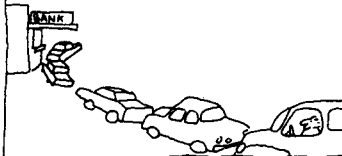
Avoid hot rod starts.



Drive at a steady pace.



Don't let the engine idle more than 30 seconds.



And when buying, don't forget the fuel economy label is part of the price tag, too.



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The President's call in January for a return to draft registration stirred a small whirlwind of protest, but the protest didn't much catch on and by spring had nearly disappeared, as though to confirm Martin Luther King's estimate of the national attention span: America, he used to say, is a ten-day country. Even Congress's acceptance of the plan and the actual start of registration did not bring on the mass demonstrations some had feared, and others had hoped for and predicted. There would be, it seemed, no limp bodies blocking entranceways, no cops with billy clubs, and no kids with busted heads—at least not for now. All in all, the registration went well, or so the government said in July. But did everyone who was supposed to show up at the post office actually do so? A prudent skeptic may well doubt it. And are fiercest opponents of the draft merely biding their time, persuaded that the Supreme Court will find, as a federal appeals court has already done, that in excluding young women the government's plan unconstitutionally discriminates against young men? It is hard to say. What is clear, however, is that we have not yet seen the kind of debate, either in Congress or out of it, which would bring clearly into view the *real* as distinct from the advertised reasons why peacetime registration may be a good idea and why it may be necessary to go back to the draft itself.

Like so much else on the public agenda these days, the question of how we are to raise and maintain an army has both an apparent and a hidden side. The apparent side grows out of public alarm over the "crisis" in the Persian Gulf. I use the quotation marks not to express doubt that there is a crisis, but merely to question whether the administration and the networks and the newspapers were quite justified in exciting the panic that was the public's first response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It seemed forgotten in January, and seems forgotten still, that the Soviet Union exercised a 90 percent hegemony in Afghanistan before the invasion. How had this distant country suddenly become so interesting to us at just the point when the Soviets sought to acquire the remaining 10 percent? Or, if it had al-

The Real Case Against the Draft

ways been of such vital interest to the United States, why did our government react so mildly in 1978 when the original pro-Communist coup took place, and again in 1979 when, probably with Soviet connivance, our ambassador in Kabul was abducted and shot to death?

The answer is that the Carter administration had no Afghanistan policy in 1978 or in 1979 (as it has none now) and therefore could only stand dully by, a perplexed observer of these unsettling events. But when the invasion followed hard on the capture of our embassy in Teheran, it was obvious something had to be done. Hence the President's new firmness, whereby he is determined, as he assured us in his State of the Union Address, "that the United States will remain the strongest of nations." We had not heard so warlike a tone since the 1950s, nor had we ever expected to hear it from Jimmy Carter, who was barely six months in the White House when he declared us now free of that "inordinate fear of communism" which had once so marked American politics, domestic and foreign.

However sudden this change in tone, both Congress and country adapted readily to it, with the result that the atmosphere dominating these many months of debate about the draft has been the atmosphere of renewed cold war. The case is plain. Soviet divisions in Afghanistan are well placed for a lightning drive to the Gulf and thus put at risk our whole position in the Middle East. What is at stake is our commitment to Israel, is the balance of power, is Western civilization, is oil. We have to register men for the draft as a first step in meeting this new Soviet bellicosity, or, at the very least, in order to send a message to Moscow. And if the game comes out that way, we must be ready to meet our adversaries in the waste

places and on the burning sands, there to trade them blow for blow.

Now it requires no great talent for strategy to see the nonsense running unchecked here. A look at the map tells the whole story. The truth is that, in this part of the world, any conventional shoot-out between the superpowers must end in disaster for our side, because their side has an overwhelming local advantage. Moreover, we do not now possess the necessary transport to make even the semblance of a decent showing in a Persian Gulf encounter. Such a war could of course go nuclear, but then it would no longer be a war for oil; it would be a war for survival, with the superpowers aiming for maximum destruction of each other and the rest sheltering wherever they can.

Two things need saying about this Persian Gulf "scenario" (interesting how in our talk of apocalyptic war we adopt the language of movies and television, as though none of it were, after all, quite real). The first is that for the Soviets to attempt such a strike would require an astonishing departure from their usual prudence and caution. Would they really try to get hold of Middle Eastern oil by military conquest? The idea is so essentially insane as to be almost inconceivable. And the second is that if the "Carter Doctrine" means anything at all, then it means we are ready to wage nuclear war in response to a direct Soviet military attack in the Gulf region. This follows from their superior position and conventional arms, and from our unpreparedness. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states have thus been elevated in our strategic economy to a European status and now enjoy the same guarantees as Berlin or West Germany. We may perhaps take some comfort in the thought that, in the short term at least, this makes war in the Persian Gulf not very likely. For unless we suppose the men in the Kremlin are at the point where they dismiss what Washington says as mere bluff, then we must suppose they have received this dire message and, sober men that they are, have soberly reflected on it.

Naturally, all this talk of war has stirred memories, especially the memories of those who bore the battle in Vietnam and of those who refused to bear it. We hear outcries

against registration and against the draft, and we hear some arguments too, though most of them are as wide of the mark as the pro-registration and pro-draft case they pretend to answer. They are very much the standard arguments heard since World War I, when military conscription in its modern form first became an issue: that the draft is "involuntary servitude," that either registration or the draft is a provocative act bound to lead to war, that the proper time to raise an army is when an enemy launches a direct attack, that we would be damned fools to fight a war for the sake of the oil companies, and so on to a good many variations.

We may well be fools, but if so these arguments are a part of our foolishness. True, the Constitution (by the 13th Amendment) forbids "involuntary servitude," by which it means, precisely, slavery and not a tour of duty. The courts long ago held that the draft does not violate *civil* rights; and no philosophy of *natural* rights ever supposed the community has no claims on our service, even if these claims would require us to do things we don't want to do, or put our lives in peril. Nor have we any good ground for believing that either having a draft or not having one leads to war, but our experience with unpreparedness in the 1930s would suggest it is better to be prepared than not. Grave doubt must attend the idea that the draft had anything to do with causing the Vietnam war, for in the early '60s, when the critical decisions were made, the Pentagon's thinking did not center on the availability of conscripts. It centered, rather, on faith that success in Vietnam could be had by an astute combination of computers, cost-effectiveness, and counter-insurgency. Wait until attacked? Maybe history has something for us here. In 1814 President Madison, no exponent of the 'big stick,' refused till the last moment to call up the militia and learned the hard way how far to place reliance on untrained troops: of 93,000 summoned only 6,000 showed up, and these ran for home at the first rattle of musketry. Madison himself fled in ignominy, and every government building in Washington was burned to the ground. As for the oil companies, though it is easy enough to believe they plot and conspire, it is hard to believe they want a war whose certain result would be the complete de-

struction of their investments. But of course we are not dealing with logic here, or even with the lessons our past might teach. We are dealing with the mistrust and privatism that are the moral legacy of American politics over the last two decades.

* * *

Both the government's case for registration and the draft-opposition's case against it address what I have called the apparent side of the question. But only on the hidden side (hidden not because it is difficult to understand but because it is external to the public's normal range of interest) do we find a case for registration and for the draft having some claim to our thoughtful attention. This case starts from the premise that the war we are committed to fight, and the war we are most likely to have to fight, is a war in Europe. This war, an all-out clash between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, would bring appallingly high casualties in its first weeks. So high, indeed, are the expected losses that the Pentagon refuses to publish its estimates. It is plain, however, that our reserves, gravely attenuated since the draft came to an end in the early '70s, would be unable to meet the demand for replacements. At this juncture we would of course restore the draft, but its usefulness would depend critically on whether or not a registration system was already in place when mobilization began. Without such a system, we would need a full ten months to turn the first draftees into combat soldiers; with one, we would need only seven. This three-month difference, says the Army, could well hold the balance between victory and defeat, or at any rate between defeat and the avoidance of it.

So the argument in favor of registration is just that it seems little enough to ask young men to pick up a Bic and sign their names, when we count the possible cost of not doing so.

The argument in favor of the draft is more complex but equally clear in its outlines, maintaining that the volunteer system has badly damaged both our reserves and our active forces. The reserves, it holds, are desperately weak (500,000 short by the Army's figures) because the volunteer system removes any incentive for young men to enlist as "weekend warriors." Restoring the draft would

restore the incentive. As to the active force, the all-volunteer Army fails to attract either enough men or enough qualified men, and fails to hold on to those it does attract. It is dangerously low on trained combat specialists and on medical personnel. It is also too black and too much drawn from the ranks of the economically disadvantaged. Dare we rely on an army a good part of whose volunteers are high school dropouts (53 percent) and belong in the lowest acceptable mental category (36 percent); whose enlisted personnel read, on the average, at a fifth-grade level; and whose recruitment goals are more and more likely to go unmet in the 1980s because military-age men will be nothing like as numerous as they were in the '70s? Above all, can we justify the sending into combat of infantry and armored units dominantly made up of inner-city blacks and poor rural whites? It is highly disturbing to think about the probable reaction of minority communities in time of war when the knowledge comes home to them that their sons and brothers are bearing an undue share of the devastating losses expected by the Pentagon. The danger is real that the commander in chief, weighing the political consequences of such a reaction, would hesitate, perhaps fatally, to commit to the judgment of battle a force upwards of 60 percent black in some of its combat arms.

Statistics in plenty can be found to support these views, and other statistics can be found to dispute them. But however one sorts the evidence, what remains the central issue is long-run military necessity, and not any recent misbehavior on the part of the Soviet Union. In the present atmosphere, this important fact goes largely unrecognized, and therefore the matters which most need discussing go largely undiscussed. The draft debate has centered on the notion that Afghanistan uncovers to us some new and alarming truth about the sources of Soviet conduct. Why this should be our preoccupation is not hard to explain. Did not the President himself say the invasion "could pose the most serious threat to peace since the Second World War," and that these events had changed completely his assessment of Soviet intentions? The Afghanistan adventure and the persistence of the Soviets in it have been taken to show the need for a change all along the line in our at-

titude toward Moscow, for what John Foster Dulles long ago called an "agonizing reappraisal." They have been taken, in sum, to show the foolishness of *détente* and the wisdom of a pullback from it.

Last September the Congress rejected draft registration on the ground that we did not need it. In June the Congress accepted draft registration on the ground that we must now get tough with the Russians. Jimmy Carter of course agreed with both decisions. We thus return to the high-noon style of international politics. It is hard to imagine a more unpromising way to grasp the nettle, for our proper subject is not how to get tough. Our proper subject, rather, is what our defense requirements really are and how we may meet them. When Congress rushed to embrace the volunteer principle in the early '70s, it did so under extreme pressure from antiwar-antidraft demonstrations, and chiefly because it wanted to relieve that pressure. As a result, the debate preceding the establishment of the all-volunteer force failed signally to consider the effect a reliance on volunteerism would have on our ability to meet our long-standing strategic commitments. This effect has been very large, and it has not been such as to give grounds for repose.¹ In the debate this year, it would seem, we have made a similar mistake in that we have once again let slip by the opportunity to set proper terms for discussion and keep at the matter to the point where our efforts yield a rational and agreed-upon foundation for military policy.

The real case for registration and for the draft is the one concerned with mobilization schedules, the adequacy of the volunteer Army, and the justice of letting the poor and the black do our fighting for us. But is there a corresponding case on the other side, a real case against registration and against the draft? There is. It consists simply in the extreme difficulty of carrying out either one against an adverse public opinion. Here the reader may object that opinion on this question has changed significantly within the past year. And so it has. At the end of the Vietnam War,

¹Kenneth J. Coffey, *Strategic Implications of the All-Volunteer Force: the Conventional Defense of Central Europe* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 18.

Coming in the NAR:

Harold P. Simonson: The Legacy of John Muir

John R. Reed: Decadent Style

Roy R. Behrens: Camouflage

Scott Sanders: Cloud Crossing

&

More fiction

More poetry

More reviews

64 percent of all Americans opposed the draft, but this figure diminished during the years after 1973 till, in 1978, it stood at about 47 percent.² Iran and Afghanistan have further weakened this opposition, bringing about a clear reversal of public sentiment as it stood at the end of the war. By late winter this year a large majority of Americans had come to favor draft registration (76 percent for; 22 percent against: ABC-Harris Survey, March 1980). No doubt these figures explain a good deal about why registration has so far proceeded with relative calm, but they do not warrant the belief that the public would easily accept a return to the draft.

What really matters anyway is not the overall shape of public opinion, which is an inconstant measure at best. What matters is whether those who actually must register or be inducted can be brought to see the performing of military service as something they *ought* to do. Here we are up against a genuine difficulty. For the generations of Americans coming to maturity since, let us say, 1960 mostly lack the feelings of patriotism that caused earlier generations to regard military service as a civic duty, or perhaps even as an honor. We have now been through nearly twenty years during which political events and all the forces of education in our society have worked to denigrate things military and to make them repugnant to a great part of the public. The utopian politics of the 1960s gave way to the self-concern and narcissism of the '70s, and the popular value system of these two decades has pretty well destroyed the

idea of obligations owing under the terms of the social contract. *My* freedom and *my* rights, not to mention *my* comfort and *my* good times, the claims of the imperial self—these are the notions that dominate American minds in the 1980s.

* * *

So the real case against registration or against the draft is not economic, moral, or constitutional. It is political. Young men and women may simply not put up with conscription. They may refuse to register, they may refuse to be inducted, they may fight in the courts on all the legal points it is possible to raise (a rich variety since Vietnam), and they may go to jail or run away. They may, in short, hold fast to the slogans and poses of the 1960s and 1970s, which for them have become moral axioms of unquestioned authority. Hell no; we won't go. It must give us pause to reflect that during the Vietnam war a mere 1 percent of all draft-age men failed to register and another 1 percent refused induction.³ Yet the system was put under severe strain and, as many believe, very nearly failed. When some 82 percent of those 18 to 24 oppose the draft, and when large numbers in every age group feel a profound mistrust of government, and when the idea of civic obligation no longer has much credit with ordinary people, we may well come to doubt whether registration or the draft, however needed, can be made to work.⁴ —*Scott Edwards*

³Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: the Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 244.

⁴Coffey, p. 162.

²Coffey, p. 151.

DAVID WOJAHN

COLD GLOW: ICEHOUSES

Because the light this morning is recondite
like figures behind curtains a long way off,
because the morning is cold and this room is heatless,
I've gone without sleep, I brood.
The protocol of memory: the faucet dripping
into a sponge, then thinking of the way
I watched White Bear Lake freeze over
twenty years ago in Minnesota, the carp oblivious below.
I still can't understand.

I thought last night of Soloman Petrov
a Ukrainian rabbi in my college science books
afflicted with total recall, a pathological memory
that made perspective impossible.
Once for doctors he remembered running for a train
in Petersburg in winter. They recorded
his quickened pulse, body temperature plunging.
The death by fever of his first wife Tania
was not remembered, but continually relived.

And memory is not accomplishment.
Last night again you described for me
our child pulled dead from your womb. In sleep you talked
to yourself and the child, who passed unnamed
wholly into memory. Now you wanted peace,
some distance. And every memory, said Soloman Petrov,
must proceed unchanged in the mind, going on
like smoke to designate itself again.
Like a second floor window where I stood as a boy
to watch the fishermen park their cars
on the lake, icehouse lights in the evening below.

Or our child whose name is only ash,
is only thought too hurtful to free.
Mornings like these, he floats at the window, waiting
and mouthing his name, there through a tangent of ice,
his face and hands ashimmer.

Erich Jantsch

ETHICS AND EVOLUTION

Such a beauty, set beside
so brief a season,
suggests to our stunned reason
this bleak surmise :
the world was made to hold
no end or *telos*,
and if—as some would tell us—
there is a goal
it's not ourselves.

Joseph Brodsky, *The Butterfly*

Ethics and Morality

In a structure-oriented view, ethics is often understood as a metaphysical category, as a set of rules of behavior which is valid in an absolute sense or at least given as a logical *a priori*. This view is further enhanced by the claim to absolute validity raised by religions and ideologies which incorporate ethics as their pragmatic aspect. The only legitimate attitude in such a view is, then, adaptation, the highest value survival. Since survival of the individual is an impossible goal, at least for sexually reproducing organisms, survival of the species usually substitutes as nature's goal and becomes as well a tenable guiding image for mankind. This is an equilibrium view which corresponds to the tacit assumption that the present state of evolution, and especially the human species, constitutes the ultimate aim of evolution, the permanent platform which was meant to be reached. Had an adaptation-and-survival ethics really dominated evolution at any stage, evolution would have come to an end then and there; to set the human stage absolute today is just another *hybris*, to which science seems to contribute more than willingly.

In contrast, in a process-oriented view which emphasizes the evolution of systems, self-determination is the focus of interest. Ethics here refers to the dynamics of systems, not to the stabilization of a particular structure. But the self-organization dynamics at different levels of evolution follow different emphasis criteria.¹ At the level of chemical dissipative structures, the core criterion is the ensurance of high energy throughput; at the level of the complex, sexually reproducing cell, it is variety; at the level of the organism, it is flexibility and the ability to cope with the unexpected; and so forth.

Quite generally, ethical behavior may be defined as

¹Erich Jantsch, *Die Selbstorganisation des Universums*, Hanser, Munich, 1979; English version under the title *The Self-Organizing Universe: Scientific and Human Implications of the Emerging Paradigm of Evolution* forthcoming (Pergamon Press, Oxford and New York, 1980).

that kind of behavior which enhances evolution. But this implies that ethics is not given *a priori*, but emerges with evolution and follows a development which, in principle, is as wide open as is evolution. With each new level of evolution, a new ethics comes into play and also a new mechanism through which this ethics acts as a regulatory device. In biology this mechanism is genetic, in sociobiology it uses a chemical basis. In the human world it consists chiefly of laws, rules of behaviorism and taboos—but also of morality acting as a direct inner experience. Ultimately, all conservative information pertaining to evolutionary guidance may be called ethics, from genetic to sociocultural types of storage.

As an integral aspect of evolution, ethics is not subject to revelation, as is the ethics of religions with a personal god. Rather, it may be experienced directly by way of the dynamics of self-organization and creative process. I should like to call this experiential aspect of ethics *moral-ity*. As a dynamic principle, morality is a manifestation of the mind—the slowly acting metabolic mind at its appropriate levels, as well as the neural mind at the evolutionary levels characterized by central nervous systems and brains. The direct living experience of morality becomes expressed in the form of ethics—it becomes form in the same way in which biological experience becomes form in the genetic code. The stored ethical information is then selectively retrieved and applied in the moral process in real-life situations. The interaction between ethics and morality is comparable to the epigenetic process in which genetically stored information is retrieved and applied to life situations. In such processes, complexity is made available to life.

It is nonsense to claim that animals lack morality. Their morality simply belongs to another level of consciousness. However, morality becomes more richly or-

In *The Responsibility of the Academic Community in the Search for Absolute Values*, Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (Los Angeles, 1979.) In press, New York, N.Y.: International Cultural Foundation Press, 1980.

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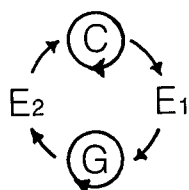
chestrated with evolution. Thereby, it gradually replaces the genetically determined instinct as a regulator of behavior. In the human realm, where possibilities for action are available in such a wide spectrum, it is primarily the mental structures—our intentions, desires, and preferences, plans, visions, and paradigms—which are guided by morality and determine our overall behavior.

The higher the number of levels and the intensity at which we live, the higher also become the number of levels and the intensity at which our morality becomes effective as an aspect of our complex consciousness. The resulting tension between ethics and morality is one of the core elements of the ancient Greek tragedy. In conflict with the law, Sophocles' Antigone buries her brother Polyneikes, who had rebelled against the king and whose body was therefore left to the wild animals outside the city walls. Her morality bids her to put the divine law of love above the law of the state. But the law of the state, too, is an expression of the divine order. Out of her own free will and with great inner strength, Antigone accepts her death. She is not crushed by a blind fate, as modern interpretations would have it. She is living out her destiny without escaping its consequences. In the tragic turn of her life she gains the ultimate freedom.

Examples of Evolutionary Ethics in the Prehuman World

What evolves in evolution is not entities, but webs of processes, the dynamic organization of a system within itself and in relation to the environment. According to Manfred Eigen,² the origin of life may be understood from the evolution of hypercycles—i.e., logically closed cycles of reactions in which one or more steps are of an auto- or cross-catalytic nature. The hypercycles in question are of second degree; that is to say, they are combining two functions: Polynucleotides carry the information for their own self-reproduction as well as for the production of a polypeptide (a protein); the polypeptides, on their side, enhance the reactions by acting as enzymes (biocatalysts). We may speak of a primitive form of *symbiosis* in which two species of molecules, one of which is an excellent information-carrier and the other one a superb catalyst, join hands to get further. However, they can get further only if they are open to occasional copying errors which override the error-correcting cyclical organization. Thus, imperfection is required for evolution, the possibility of embracing error and destabilization.

But something else is also needed to make this reaction cycle evolve. It determines already the first precursor-hypercycle which, according to Eigen and Schuster,³ consisted of just two nucleotides—cytosine and guanine—and two proteins. It is evident that the protein informed by cytosine has to further in the first line the catalysis of guanine, and not of



²Manfred Eigen, "Self-organization of matter and the evolution of biological macromolecules," *Naturwissenschaften* 58 (1971), 465-523.

³Manfred Eigen and Peter Schuster, *The Hypercycle: A Principle of Natural Self-Organization*, Springer, Heidelberg, Berlin and New York, 1979.

its parent-nucleotide, and that, by the same token, the guanine-fathered protein has to engage primarily in the catalysis of cytosine. As Eigen and Schuster put it, *mutual enhancement prevails over self-enhancement*. The other way round, symbiotic nucleotide-protein pairs would still be able to reproduce themselves, but the hypercycle—and with it, the possibility of evolution toward higher complexity—would break down and evolution would find itself in a *cul-de-sac*. *Evolution is impossible without altruism*, even at the molecular level.

At a later stage, still early in the history of life on earth, self-interest was again overruled by evolution. The first prokaryotic organisms on earth, especially the blue-green algae, started to produce oxygen almost immediately although they were, at that stage, not fit to cope with it. Oxygen burns organic tissue based on carbon. According to very recent findings by the Max-Planck-Institute for Chemistry in Mainz (Germany),⁴ aerobic (oxygen-yielding) photosynthesis had already started 3,800 million years ago—not long after the birth of the solar system 4,600 million years ago—and probably preceded anaerobic photosynthesis, for example on sulphur basis, as it developed later. This may be determined from the C¹²/C¹³ ratio in the oldest known sedimentary rock formations in Greenland. In biogenous carbon deposits, this ratio is 2.5 per cent higher than in non-biological deposits. At the same time, traces of chlorophyll were found, but no traces of sulphur from anaerobic photosynthesis.

For almost 2,000 million years, the produced oxygen did not accumulate in any noticeable quantities in the atmosphere, but was used instead for the oxidation of the earth's surface, especially iron and sulphur. Only about 2,000 million years ago did significant amounts of free atmospheric oxygen appear—and with it, the prokaryotes had to pay for their altruistic activity. Some were able to adapt. The oldest fossil heterocysts, thick-walled cell parts which protect enzymes from oxygen, date back 2,200 million years. Many prokaryotes, however, never adapted and had to retreat into the soil, into mud and sewers, hindguts of animals and other oxygen-free environments. Some even sold their special skills for protection from oxygen, as did the nitrogen-fixating bacteria in their symbiosis with leguminous plants which sweep the oxygen away by circulating haemoglobin (the same basic stuff of which blood was made at a much later stage of evolution, also for the purpose of oxygen transport).

What made these first organisms, which were also the best adapted creatures ever to rule the earth, venture out on such a dangerous course? Certainly it was not concern for adaptation and the survival of their "species." True, photosynthesis had to be developed sooner or later, or life on earth would have suffocated in its own waste. In an isolated system, entropy would have increased, a fate prevented from happening by the establishment of the cosmic connection and the use of free energy from solar photons. But aerobic photosynthesis was only one of several possibilities. There was no absolute need for oxygen production from this angle of view. We do not know for sure why life took this direction. But we do know that the much more efficient energy processes based on oxygen (15 times higher efficiency in winning back the energy stored in the glucose molecule) were a prerequisite for the emergence of eukaryotic (nucleated) cells and, further,

⁴"Biologischer Kohlenstoff vor 3,8 Milliarden Jahren," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 31 July 1979.

for multicellular organisms. Again, evolution would have come to an end without this act of self-transcendence by the prokaryotes.

At the stage of complex animals, examples abound of altruistic behavior enhancing a specific reproductive line of generations—up to that ultimate act of self-sacrifice which certain spider mothers perform when they direct their digestive juices into their own bodies in order to liquefy themselves and let their offspring suck the life out of their mother's body. A fashionable reductionist sociogenetics, which is misleadingly called sociobiology by its protagonists—as if genetics were all there is to biology!—elaborates a naïve belief in a mysterious “call of the gene.” That things are not so simple is already borne out by the recently researched behavior of the Galapagos sea elephants. A typical cow gives birth every year, but is capable of nursing one baby only. On the other hand, the babies require nursing during two years. When a new baby is born, the mother tries to fight off the older child and to devote its full attention to the newly-born. But the older child does not give in and usually wins in the end; the newly-born is abandoned. Only in this way can effective reproduction be assured, of course. It is not an individual organism, but the process which wins over by mechanisms which seem to engage several levels of ethics.

Evolution-enhancing behavior has not been in the focus of a research which is blinded by the popular image of a “punctuated equilibrium” in evolution. As if evolution were not creation, but just deviation from an equilibrium. Many examples are cited of symbiotic relationships by which organisms enhance their relations with the environment, but usually symbiosis is viewed from an angle which emphasizes a “survival value.” More recently, however, it has become increasingly realized that symbiosis also is at the core of the evolution of evolutionary levels and mechanisms—of a metaevolution—in the microevolution of life. The origin of eukaryotic cells lies in the endosymbiosis of various prokaryotes which maintain their semi-independence in the form of intracellular organelles, such as mitochondria and chloroplasts.⁵ Multicellular organisms arose from the endosymbiosis of eukaryotic cells, a process which may still be studied in the various stages of cell colony formation (for example, in fresh water algae).

On the macrobranch of life's evolution, ecosystems establish intricate hypercycles which are capable of evolution. Since ecology is such a young science, with only a few decades' worth of systematic empirical research to draw its conclusions from, the evolution of ecosystems is usually disregarded in favor of their resilience to change. But the more recent notions of co-evolution (a term coined by Paul Ehrlich and Pater Raven in 1965) and of ultracycles (Ernst von Weizsäcker⁶) draw attention to the fact that not only “friendly” symbiotic relationships, but also competition and even predator-prey relationships give rise to such co-evolution and thereby to an evolution which is not blind, but learning from past and present

experience. A predator eating its prey looks like an act of total destruction, when viewed at the level of the individual organism. However, it may be shown that both the predator and the prey species may evolve in such a relationship between species and that both may enlarge their niches and their population figures.⁷ We may even speak of *process symbiosis*. Such a process symbiosis, of course, is only assured if no side ever scores total success in its hunting and escaping endeavors, respectively. Such an ethics is also mandatory for a viable relationship between humans with their powerful technology, on the one side, and the ecosystems of which they form part, on the other.

There is no need to feel ashamed of evolution. With the partial exception of photosynthesizing plants (and some light- and heat-using bacteria) all life lives off other life—we humans included, even if we no longer devour our prey in the open fields, but use agriculture and slaughterhouses instead. Life is inevitably coupled to solar energy, and food chains are the way in which energy is used. If the angle of view widens from the individual life of a specific mortal organism to the processes of life and, further, to evolution-at-large, a new meaning emerges, a meaning inherent in the interconnectedness of all natural processes.

In later stages of evolution, species-specific colonies become further differentiated by division of labor, as is found, for example, in insect colonies. Social evolution increasingly supplements and eventually overtakes biological evolution. Ethics is no longer represented by the genetic code alone and by genetically anchored instinctive behavior, but also by learned behavioral patterns and traditions. This is certainly a factor playing a role in the marked acceleration shown by evolution in its later stages.

Evolutionary Ethics at the Human Level

At the higher levels of human consciousness, which include self-reflection, the enhancement of evolution implies more than simple self-reproduction and evolution of a species which already characterize earlier steps in evolution. It also goes beyond altruism and process symbiosis which are basic to the evolution of life at all levels. What comes into focus now is self-transcendence through assumption of *responsibility* by the individual for the design and evolution of the macrosystems in which they participate. We design and shape not only the physical, biological and social aspects of the systems of human life—using the power inherent in man-made technology—but also our systems of knowledge and belief, the epistemology of our relations with the world. We design our own culture, even if we are not fully aware of it.

It has to be emphasized here, of course, that there are two very different dynamics at work in mankind. Lévi-Strauss⁸ calls them “clockwork” and “steam-engine” societies, respectively, and links their difference to the role of writing in the latter. But the steady-state dynamics of the historyless clockworks is fragile and disintegrates easily when it comes in contact with the evolutionary

⁵Lynn Margulis, *Origin of Eukaryotic Cells*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1970.

⁶Thomas T. Ballmer and Ernst von Weizsäcker, “Biogenese und Selbstorganisation,” in : Ernst von Weizsäcker (ed.), *Offene Systeme I : Beiträge zur Zeitstruktur von Information, Entropie und Evolution*, Klett, Stuttgart, 1974.

⁷Peter M. Allen, “Evolution, population dynamics and stability,” *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. (USA)*, 73 (1976), 665-668.

⁸Georges Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Plon et Julliard, Paris, 1961; English transl. *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1969.

dynamics of the steam-engines of which Western civilization is a prime example. We may even say that the steam-engines represent new levels of evolution which transcend the clockwork level.

Human ethics, more than any other ethics, is a multi-level ethics. Our consciousness includes transpersonal dimensions. In the wake of a reductionist sociogenetics ("sociobiology"), there even appear attempts to explain the origin of human values on a purely genetic basis. For example, George Edgin Pugh,⁹ in a voluminous book, discusses primary values which are genetically fixed and regulate the behavior by means of pleasure and pain. These primary values are food and sexuality, a modern reductionism which reminds one of the old reductionism of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx, who emphasized the proper functioning of humans in work and sex only. Pugh's secondary values—morality, ethics, and so forth—are then supposed to be established by the primary values with a view to their usefulness in problem solving!

Since, by means of our mental constructs, we design social and cultural systems, human ethics includes the *ethics of whole systems* demanded by West Churchman¹⁰. But ultimately we are called upon to develop an ethics which I should like to call an *evolutionary ethics*. It would not only transcend the individual but all of mankind, and explicitly include the main principles of evolution, such as openness, nonequilibrium, and the positive role of fluctuations, engagement, and nonattachment.¹¹ At the start of a worldwide creative crisis, putting the traditional ways of our life in question at all levels, we are still far from formulating and implementing such an evolutionary ethics.

What, in the Western world, we today call ethics is a behavioral code at the social level which is primarily geared to ensure the free unfoldment of the individual. This is the reason there is so much talk of rights—of basic human rights as well as of rights of particular groups, minorities, privileged and underprivileged people—but almost never of responsibilities. Sir Geoffrey Vickers¹² has pointed out that rights constitute a static and defensive, structure-oriented concept, whereas the acceptance of responsibility implies creative participation in the design of the human world. The ethics which dominates in the Western world is therefore an individualistic ethics in the disguise of a socially committing behavioral code. It is not multilevel ethics in the true sense.

A dynamic ethics of becoming, in contrast to a static ethics of being, does not know possession. The inhabitants of the Indonesian island of Bali do not view themselves as possessors of the island, but as guests on the island of the gods—guests who have to work hard every day for their living. And yet, this spirited feeling of being the guests of the gods never fades. It is the never-depleted source of a happiness which manifests itself in continuous gratitude, in sacrifices to all gifts of life—water, fire,

food, everything. There is also no fear of death, and funerals are joyous affairs. In the Western world, we do not live much longer than the Balinese do; our possessions vanish no less. But the Western proprietary ethics suggests that the meaning of life is not in the process of living to the fullest extent, but in the accumulation of money and goods, knowledge and influence.

Process-oriented thinking does not know any sharp separation between opposite aspects of reality. It also transcends a dialectic synthesis of opposites, that clumsy Western attempt at making a rigid structure of notions move and overcome its dualism. In process thinking, and therefore in evolutionary ethics, there is only *complementarity* in which the opposites include each other. Friedrich Hölderlin, in his Sophocles distich, has given this thought perhaps the most profound expression:

*Viele versuchten umsonst, das Freudigste freudig zu sagen.
Hier spricht endlich es mir, hier in der Trauer sich aus.*

(Many seek vainly, joyously to express joy.
Finally I apprehend it, here in my sorrow.)

What is technologically good may be socially evil. What the individual desires (e.g., unlimited gasoline for his car) may appear undesirable at the level of the national economy. Viewed microscopically, war is always evil, and yet I feel that World War II brought something very good to my generation—the alternative to living in a Thousand Year's Empire. The bubonic plague diminished the world population by one-third and caused more personal suffering than we can imagine today, but evolution was not thrown back by it; the life processes, including the population growth of mankind, continued. In evolution, *homeorhesis* is generally a very important and significant phenomenon. This is the term which Conrad Waddington applied to the tendency of processes to continue in their original patterns, even if temporarily disturbed. Homeorhesis is probably more important in evolution than homeostasis, the tendency of structures to remain the same.

Perhaps evolution will not be too deeply disturbed by any turbulent development in the near future which results in the loss (or rather the *premature* loss) of many lives. An organism which has reproduced itself may be spared by biological evolution. By the same token, a human who has made his contribution to sociocultural evolution is not lost for evolution when he dies. Perhaps the major catastrophes on the planet earth mean not much more to evolution than the weeding out of a garden which permits more beautiful flowers to grow. Would it be so bad if Western technology has to yield to, say, Asian vitality and culture (including an old process-oriented epistemology)? If, as Bertrand de Jouvenel¹³ holds, we are gardeners of the planet earth, we ought to understand these ambitions of evolution.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of an evolutionary ethics at the human level is the refutation of a purely rational approach to the generation of knowledge about the world. Even science, a partial system of knowledge embedded in Western tradition, owes its progress to an important degree to the *breaking* of rational, established

⁹George Edgin Pugh, *The Biological Origin of Human Values*, Basic Books, New York, 1977.

¹⁰C. West Churchman, *Challenge to Reason*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1968.

¹¹See, for example, the monography: Grégoire Nicolis and Ilya Prigogine, *Self-Organization in Nonequilibrium Systems: From Dissipative Structures to Order through Fluctuations*, Wiley-Interscience, New York, 1977.

¹²Geoffrey Vickers, *Making Institutions Work*, Associated Business Programmes, London, 1973.

¹³Bertrand de Jouvenel, *Arcadie, essais sur le mieux vivre*, SEDEIS, Paris, 1968.

rules, as Paul Feyerabend¹⁴ argues so convincingly. Theories do not need to be falsified before they are replaced. Systems of human knowledge represent particular structures of human relations with reality and are subject to change with these relations; subjectivity and objectivity fall together in a complementarity. It is the *whole* man with his curiosity and ambition, likes and dislikes—and not just his rational skills—that generates knowledge in particular, ever-changing, evolving structures. Knowledge is not unravelled, but generated; it is part of the self-organization of the universe.¹ In contrast, the older notion of science as an asymptotic, rational approach to one and only, absolute, “objective” Truth, elaborated in great detail by modern rationalists from Alfred Tarski to Karl Popper, ultimately corresponds to an equilibrium view which implies death—the death of creativity, imagination, and ongoing self-organization. But physics is not coming to an end, as Werner Heisenberg proclaimed in a lecture he gave in Berkeley shortly before his death, and philosophy continues to evolve after Martin Heidegger, who modestly denied such a possibility.

Man is a crisis provoker, somebody has said, and it is this quality which ensures the continuing evolution of the human spirit. Man himself generates the fluctuations which continually test the stability of his social and mental

constructs—just as dissipative self-organization does in physical, biological, ecological, and sociobiological systems. The paradigm shift in Thomas Kuhn’s¹⁵ theory of scientific revolutions gives a plausible description of how knowledge evolves through an indefinite sequence of structures, just as other self-organizing systems do. Knowledge is not cumulative; it evolves because it is not a reflection of something absolute, but an alive web of relations between ourselves and reality.

Evolution depends on conditions of openness, nonequilibrium and ambition (autocatalysis, self-reinforcement). It has nothing to do with static notions such as adaptation (to an evolution “out there”) or survival, with the stabilization of a given structure, or with the emergence of anything absolute and final. An ethics of the absolute—or an absolute ethics—vainly tries to stop evolution and its creative dynamics. The rational mind, set absolute, is geared to trying the same. But we do not have to fear that any absolute construct proclaimed by political, religious, ideological or scientific dogmatists will ever prevail and stem the tide of life. Least of all in the human world where, as Mircea Eliade¹⁶ puts it, “it is not the philological mind that was a creator of culture, but divination, pathos, imagination—in a word, *Error* (in capitals and underlined).” □

¹⁴Paul K. Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, New Left Books, London, 1975; paperback, Schocken Books, New York, 1977.

¹⁵Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd enlarged ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962.

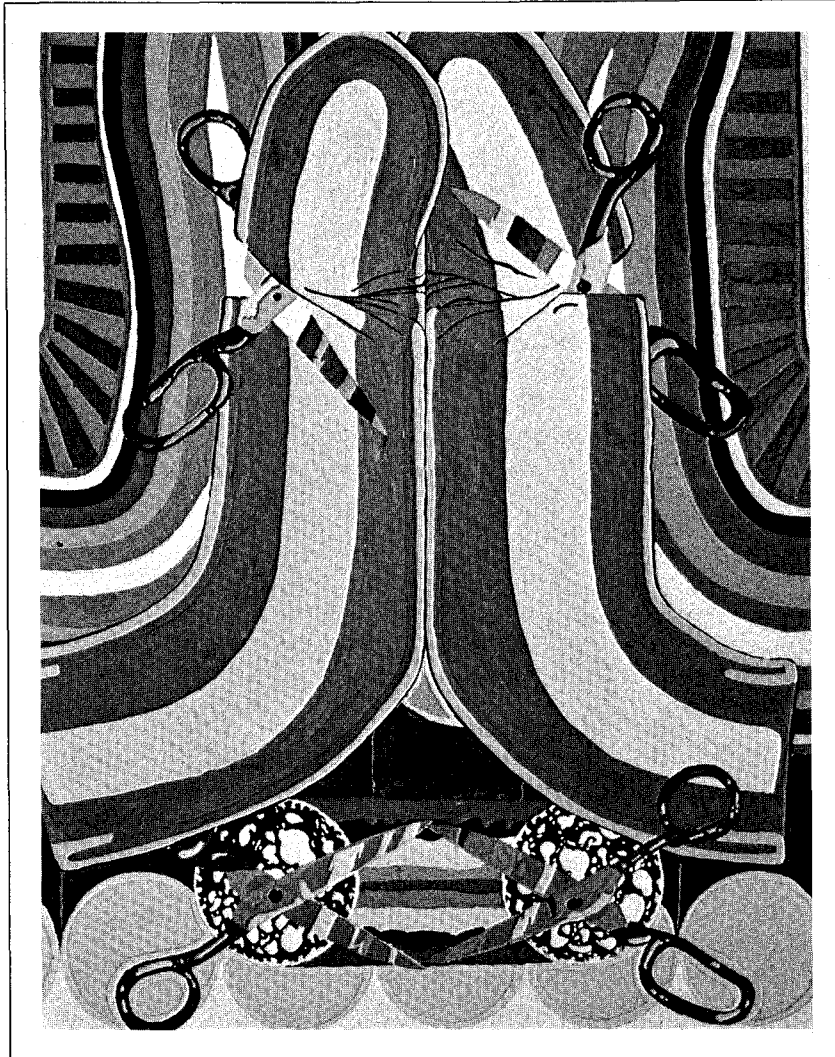
¹⁶Mircea Eliade, *No Souvenirs: Journal 1957-1969*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978; p. 178.

WILLIS BARNSTONE STAINED GLASS

Standing uptight in books against the wall,
my poets want to shine like jonquils or
apocalyptic John, and one night crawl
into my hunger, each a minotaur
dining on virgins in its labyrinth
of ink. For me they're rays of horny song,
night widows of the sun, a hyacinth
of hope. I am their only friend along
the shelf. If I crawl in with them, the dust
will make me bald and poor, my face will flake
like Alexandrian tomb masks, with dead eyes
growing huge, black and cracked. And so my lust
for poets is like pilgrims at the fake
shrine of old saints, a stained glass of surprise.

M. Kimberly Calvillo

The Zip-A-Dee-Do-Dah Day



She says you're married."

"To her? There's some mistake. We only work together. I only rode along in the ambulance."

"Is she allergic to anything? We might have to give her an injection to calm her down."

"How the hell should I know?"

"She says you're her husband, fella."

"You can see I'm not wearing a ring."

"What's your Blue Cross number?"

It is the season of heavy downpours. Early spring rains and tax forms. She is trying to ignore how empty she is feeling. A couple of times she tries to disguise to her friends that she is dead inside. She suspects they already know. They are finding her out. Her friends. Her parents. They help her find help. She goes every Friday at 3:30. After her afternoon kindergarten class. She sits every Friday for fifty minutes and tries to talk to the man who

reminds her of a TV commercial. The one about Radio Free Europe. He seldom speaks in complete sentences to her. She opens her mouth and her words pile up like snowdrifts at his feet. Loneliness. Self-hatred. Lust. Anger. A cesspool of information: her past. He gives her bottles filled with pills. Medication. Glass galaxies of hope colored in rainbows, named after the great continents of the mind: Stellazine, Marplan, Mellaril, Norpramine—and the great white hope, Lithium. She swallows them along with her pride.

She goes each Friday as a kind of joke. A personal tragedy. This is help, they say. Help. That was what she was trying to say when the ambulance drivers gentled her out of the teachers' lounge and into the golden pumpkin.

Downstairs in the hospital cafeteria, three of her friends are drinking coffee. Two women. One man. They are making nervous conversation. They await a medical decision. The women are terrified. They want to do the right thing. They are embarrassed and loyal. They want the man to see how strong and resourceful they are in this time of crisis.

M. KIMBERLY CALVILLO is a teacher in Coon Rapids, Iowa.

"Marie seemed to have herself well in hand at noon today. No depression or anxiety. What do you suppose brought it all on?"

This is Lucille. She is a school librarian. She sits with her coffee cup poised in midair and her other hand on the arm of the man. She is thinking how well she would look pictured on a holy card. Just this way. St. Lucille of the Dewey Decimal System, Pray for us. Lucille is supposed to be at an AAUW meeting tonight. She is late. She is supposed to make a speech. The topic is Human Relations. Lucille glances over at the man, hoping he notices the strategic location of her hand. Lucille will be thirty next month. Prince Charming will be twenty-five in September. A waitress comes by with more coffee and he raises his arm for a refill. At thirty, Lucille still loses out to coffee cups. Both hands now lie naked in her lap.

"Oh, Lucille, you know she hasn't been herself in months. Months."

This is Mildred. Another kindergarten teacher. Mildred is somewhat perplexed. It is a new and uncomfortable feeling for her. Mildred is the type of woman who is proud of her college education. Boxes in her apartment are filled with every examination, treatise, essay and notebook she carried religiously to class. She hoards them like certificates of deposit. She marks her calendars neatly with plans and future appointments. She might be an intellectual giant. She might be entertaining at cocktail parties, should she give up her books long enough. She has convinced herself she is happily single. Not so much from choice, it would seem, as from the natural order of things. At the grocery store magazine rack, she reaches consistently for *U.S. News & World Report* rather than *Cosmopolitan*. Mildred of sensible shoes and serviceable clothing. Mildred of Methodist prayer meetings and pot-luck suppers.

Every day she fulfills her self-prophecies—methodically, letter perfect. The illusion that she is controlling her own life pervades the relationships she cultivates with her friends. All social engagements are well planned and meticulously arranged. No jolts. Nothing unexpected. Until now. Until this man. And Marie. Marie is a perplexity to Mildred. Their friendship is an even greater perplexity.

"Steve, are you all right?" Mildred is mothering again. She chastises herself for this. She is worried about her friend. She is worried about herself. She wants many things from this man.

The man looks up as from a deep sleep. He starts to explain something. Lucille interprets.

"Now Mildred, Stephen is perfectly fine. He's gone through such trials today. I should say. We all have to support him and encourage him in this time of hardship. Really. Oh Stephen, do eat something. Some whole wheat toast and honey? So nutritious. Some spinach salad?"

The man is exhausted. He will not know how tired he is until he returns to his apartment later and begins reading his new copy of *Rolling Stone* for fifteen minutes before realizing it is upside down.

He stares at the women wordlessly. He's done so much talking today that he is wondering if he's simply run

dry. He's been on the phone to Marie's psychiatrist. He is angry at the man's calm and simplistic manner. He is frustrated with Marie's relatives and their blindness, their trust that he has some golden answer for them when they ask, "What should we do?"

Stephen is a sixth grade math instructor. No one ever told him someday he might be pinch hitting as a psychiatrist. He finds solace in the reliable truth of multiplication tables and long division. He prides himself in his ability to read Kafka as well as Betty Crocker. Yesterday he replastered his ceiling and fixed two leaky drainpipes. He is reluctant to try fixing heads.

"I'm going upstairs."

"Now Stephen, do you think that's wise? The doctor will be down soon. You look so tired and pale. This has taken such a toll on all of us."

"I think I should see how she's doing."

"We're in a hospital, Steve. The nurses and medical staff are all specialists, experts. They are well qualified to handle these things." He looks at them. They are his colleagues. They also happen to be his friends. He is on his feet and he wants to run out of the front door and get into his car.

He makes it just in time to take the stairs instead of the elevator. Two at a time. A man should stay in shape. A man should make his own choices. Make hay. Make time. Make out. Make love. Make your own bed. His legs are hurting. There is a sign on the sixth floor door: MENTAL HEALTH UNIT. NO ADMITTANCE. He has to knock eight times before the night nurse lets him in.

"I said get the goddam fuck out of my room, goddammit."

Marie is throwing a plate of roast beef and mashed potatoes at the nurse with the menacing hypodermic needle. He opens the door. Marie, dressed in a hospital gown and her fur coat, is standing on top of the bed. The picture of dementia. The plate zings over the head of the trembling nurse, who drops the med tray on the floor.

"Miss Costello, please. This is very unladylike behavior. You must take your medication."

Marie sees him standing in the doorway. Suddenly she feels very silly. She sits down carefully.

"God, Stevie, take me out of this hotel."

Marie is watching his face. How can she explain to him? Today. All the other days. She is miserable. She is ecstatic. She is fearless. She is a coward. She is beginning to believe she is making sense to him when the doctor arrives.

"Well now, Marie, how are we feeling?"

"Fine."

"I heard we had a little trouble settling down. Wouldn't eat our nice vegetables. Wouldn't take our medicine."

"I'm tired."

"This will help."

Marie feels like a punctured bicycle tire. She watches Stephen's face. His eyes are beginning to tear. Small tears like mirrors shine around the pale turquoise of his eyes.

She always wondered why blue was her favorite color. She never knew until now. She wonders would he be embarrassed if she told him that. She begins. But there is a buzzing behind her eyes. Stephen is talking to the doctor. He has on his Parent-Teacher Conference face. Only his eyes give him away. The doctor nods a general practitioner's nod. The door closes and they are alone.

"Can I hang up your coat, Marie? Doctor Lark won't be here until morning."

"Oh. Sure." She hands him her thrift store mouton like a child surrendering a security blanket. Once in December when they had been tobogganing, he had buried his face in the back of this coat as they sailed down the hill. At the bottom, rolling in the snow like puppies, he had kissed her. He told her it was like kissing Winnie the Pooh.

"I'm sorry you have to witness all my indignities." He is silent. She feels she has to say more. A torrent of words fly out at him. She knows of no other way to express her love now.

"Oh shit. I'm crazy. You're right. I am fucking out of my mind. But I'll make it up to you. See? Here. Here is woman."

She takes the hospital menu card and pencil and draws sweeping circles all over the list of entrees and desserts.

"See? Mother. Mother Courage. Mother Freud. Yes. That fucking mother Freud. Or is it mother-fucking in his case? Wombman. A circle. Here. Since I can't make out with you, Stevie, I'll make up to you. Okay? Here." She is dumping out the contents of her purse. She hands him all her Mary Kay cosmetics one by one. Eyebrow pencil. Lip gloss. Facial cream. Instant sexuality. Eternal beauty. She hands him her favorite picture of her childhood, the one of her and her sister Sheila at a carnival in 1958. The background shows them on a bucking bronco at a rodeo. It's fake. Sheila is crying. Marie understands and is comforting her. She has accepted, at five and a half, that she is the oldest. The leader. The protector.

"And here. Here. All the wealth of woman-kind. The treasures, the secrets, the carefully sculptured dreams of the ages are yours. All yours. And here."

Marie removes a check from her checkbook and writes *All My Money* in all of the blank spaces. She signs it with a flourish, folds it neatly and places it in his shirt pocket.

"Now you have everything."

Her head is whirling. She feels as though she might vomit. Her legs ache as if she has been running for miles. Suddenly she thinks about her classroom.

"My kids. Steve. What have I done to my kids?"

He is spinning in the sight and sound of her. She might be the woman of his dreams. She might be the pit of hell itself. He holds her hand.

"Marie, we have no children."

She almost laughs. He is so damn serious. So relentlessly immune to imagination. There are times when she wants to admit her cannibalistic love for him. To swallow him whole. Alive. He in her. The ultimate incorporation. She would show him magic. Together they could order the universe. She wants him to see her: imaginative. Creative. Loving. Sane.

She is falling asleep on his shoulder. She is thankful

for the angular lines of this body, the heavy warmth of his twenty-five years alive.

"You are a participant," she murmurs into his five o'clock shadow. "But we are shaped like this." She traces a rectangle into the palm of his hand. The way she tries to show kindergarteners how a certain shape 'feels.'

"Stevie, Marie, Lucie and Millie. A rectangle. Oblong. An elongated square. See how many triangles you can make out of a rectangle. How many diagonals in a rectangle, Mr. Math? How many triangles? How many? I'll give you a cookie if you tell me how many." She is almost asleep. She has said too much. She is afraid she has not said enough.

"Yes. Yes. I do. I do." She jolts awake as from a nightmare. His arms are around her. There is a look of pained confusion on his face. She is asleep.

"I'm going now. Please take care."

His lips brush the top of her forehead where she has cut great chunks of her blond hair away from her face that morning in an attempt to look like Farrah Fawcett. She is awake enough to wonder why he didn't kiss her on the mouth.

In the morning, the nurses roll her out of admittance in the mandatory wheelchair. She wants to walk. She is very irritated at this. She is not raving. She is not helpless. She remembers the fresh air feel of the cold March air to the roots of her closely-cropped hair. She does not remember talking to Dr. Lark. She will have no recollection of being transferred to a different hospital. She does not see her family weep. When it is all over her friends will laugh and tell her the funny things she said and did "that day". During her weeks on the 'wacko-ward', she will remember nothing of how she arrived, nothing of those first ten days. She will try valiantly to remember. The fact that she cannot will be a constant insecurity for her.

Who the hell locked my goddam closet door?"

In one hand she is clutching her toothbrush, in the other, *The American Songster*, a book of religious and secular songs. On her feet are the pink slippers the old lady across the hall gave her at breakfast this morning. She wants to put on a pair of Levi's. And a sweater. She walks out into the hall to find an orderly.

"Norman, I need my goddam clothes. Can't a person even have her own clothes around here?"

"Complain. Complain. Complain. Don't you see me working my fingers to the bone, Marie? And do I ever get so much as a 'Thank you, Norm, you're a swell guy, Norm?'"

"Thank you, Norm, you're a swell guy, Mother."

"Think I don't know passive aggression when I see it, Marie? Think I don't matter in your gestalt, hey Marie?"

Norman is standing in the doorway with his aviator glasses pulled down his nose. He is a sophomore psychology student. He works at the hospital to pay his tuition. Marie likes him for his smooth, open face and his persistent teasing.

"Get outta here, stink-o."

"Oh, I am slain. Oh, I shall nevah love again, Cap'n Butlah."

Today is Easter Sunday. She ate a pink pastel hard boiled egg this morning. She sang all the verses for "Nearer My God to Thee" and "Rock of Ages." She painted a brown rabbit on Andrew's shoulder yesterday. She said it was beautiful. He said he wanted a seasonal tattoo. He said his parents were flying in from the Bahamas to visit. He wanted to show them he had come out of his depression. Andrew had kissed her in the game room. "We have risen," he said.

Two men are smoking cigarettes and playing pool when Marie walks into the game room. She watches. One is Willis, the other a new arrival. Willis smiles and says good morning as he sinks the six and seven balls into the same side pocket. Willis used to sell real estate. He had a three-bedroom split foyer and a two-car garage. Then one night he tried to eat a Coca-Cola bottle.

Marie likes the game room. The nurses don't come down the hall this far and she likes the big windows that face the street. She is looking outside at the new spring grass. She wants to go for a walk. She wants to get better. She wants to be alive. She wants Andrew.

Andrew is at the nurses' station arguing about cigarettes.

"You have no real reason to ration them. I am an adult. I can monitor my own behavior."

He is clutching at the desk with both hands. The nurse with the bleach-blond Afro reminds Andrew that he is under doctor's orders. Two orderlies approach to punctuate her remark with what might happen should he wish to argue further. Andrew takes a step backward. At twenty-two, he has seen more psychiatric clinics than his years alive. He has become skilled in the games of the emotionally disordered. He salutes her, Third Reich fashion, and goose-steps down to the game room.

Marie sits beside Andrew on the sunken leatherette couch to watch him smoke. He inhales like a man taking his last breath. He sends great Hiroshima clouds heavenward. Both of his long, lumberjack legs twitch and jitter. He is a perpetual movement machine. She would like to hold him like a broken doll.

"They gave me one of those blue meanies today." He is lighting a second cigarette with the smouldering ash of the first one.

"How do you know?"

"Marie, I know. I go with the colors, Marie. Nobody can fool me with all of those cookies and milk at bedtime. They think I don't know where I go when I swallow all of that shit."

"It helps, though, doesn't it?"

"Oh sure. Sure. I really like to feel like I've been kayoed by Ali. I really dig the 'sleep treatments,' Marie. Did I tell you the time up at Mayo they had to cut my hair after the eighteenth 'treatment'? And then afterwards, in group, the s.o.b. moderator asks me to fricking recite the pledge of allegiance. I could barely remember my goddam name. I lost everything. Phhhht."

Andrew lights his fourth cigarette and stands up to join Willis at the pool table. He chalks his cue stick and blows a smoke ring at Marie.

She grabs his hand and pulls him close to her face.

"Giving up isn't the answer. I care. I care. I can't give up on living. It's really crazy to be alive and wish you weren't. You didn't lose everything. Read Whitman. Whitman says nothing is ever lost."

"Whitman was never on the receiving end of ECT."

She has no answer for that.

For the next eight days she busies herself with building a birdhouse in O.T. She will give it to her sister to hang on her clothesline in the backyard. Marie likes the O.T. room, with its large tables and shelves of art supplies. Marie likes Rita the therapist. She is a sunny woman with long black braids. They talk about kindergarten. They talk about Van Gogh and Pollock and de Kooning. Rita asks Marie if she is an artist.

Andrew does not want to build bird houses or draw landscapes. Marie and several others ask Andrew to come on a supervised walk outside around the hospital grounds. Andrew says no very loudly and slams a pool cue at Willis.

"Willis, screw you."

"God save you, Andrew," Willis says.

Later that night, sitting in their identical hospital-issue striped bathrobes and pajamas, Andrew and Marie talk quietly in the TV room. They are alone except for Maxine and Irma, two maiden ladies who happen also to be chronic alcoholics. Maxine and Irma like Lawrence Welk and Snickers candy bars. Today Marie bought them *Moon River* and three Snickers each.

"I heard Lark say today you're getting better. You'll go home soon."

"I feel hopeful."

"You said you loved me after the third treatment he gave you."

"What treatments? When?"

"You don't remember, do you? You looked like somebody hit you in the mouth about the fifth day you were here. I remember."

Andrew draws his knees up close to Marie and leans them into her shoulder. She rests her cheek on his kneecap. She pictures how they look together like this. Maybe Michelangelo would make a sculpture of them. Now she knows how Mary felt holding her crucified Son.

"So you suspect my saying I love you after I've been zapped by a couple hundred kilowatts?"

"I didn't say that."

"I do."

"What?"

"Love you."

He traces the line of her eye brows with his index finger and carefully brushes the jagged bangs out of her eyes.

"Your hair's growing out."

"Yeah. Wanna see my legs, too? Andy, don't. It's horrible. I look horrible. With no sharp instruments and mirrors in this joint, I can't be reminded how ugly I am."

"I got a mirror."

"Lend it to me."

"Can't."

"Why not?"

"It's you."

It is the third week. Today her parents appear with a new dress and her suitcase packed. She is surprised. She is joyful. She is apprehensive.

She finally finds Andrew in the O.T. room. He is trying to make a leather wallet. He has split his thumbnail open with the wooden mallet. He is bleeding and smoking profusely.

"I'm a great bleeder," he says. He laughs and holds up the sodden bandage. She sees how his eyes match the green in the new grass outside. She is breathless with the beauty of him. He resumes pounding designs into the leather.

"My folks are here. I guess I'm going." He stands to shake her hand. She is resentful that he is so calm and silent. Angry at herself for not having the words to unlock the world for him. She is on the verge of saying too many words. She hugs him. Hard. He hugs hard, too. She lets go first.

"I gotta go now."

She will not remember leaving. Only the memory of his eyes, his cigarettes and his battered thumb.

A week later she is back in her classroom. The children draw pictures of happy faces to welcome her back. Lucille and Mildred serve coffee and doughnuts in the teachers' lounge. There is an air of festivity. Marie is grateful. She is trying to be brave.

Marie writes Andrew every night after school. She sends him jokes, funny cartoons and her poetry. She fills the outside envelope with X's and O's. He writes only once. His handwriting is like a child's and his sentences are terse and somber. She re-reads it often, thinking there will be some true communication of his life there on the smudged page.

It is the last Friday she will see Dr. Lark. She is off the pills. Very soon she will be off the couch. Stephen wants to meet her afterward for pizza.

He says, "Is Medici's okay?"

"Okay."

"Okay?"

"Right."

"Okay, okay?"

"Yeah, neat-keenoo."

"Okay, I mean, you gonna be okay?"

"What are you trying to say?"

"Want me to come along?"

"Hell no, Stevie. I'm a big girl now. I've been to summer camp."

"I'm not kidding."

"Neither am I."

"Meet me at 4:45."

She takes the stairs to Lark's office. His nurse lets her into the small room with the two leather chairs and an ashtray and a desk, and reminds her that Blue Cross will only cover her hospitalization. Can she write a check for the balance of three hundred in office calls? Marie waits. She would like something to read. Perhaps her Card-ex, med chart and personal file. She thinks better of it. She will let Dr. Lark be the caretaker of the past.

For forty-five minutes she talks about school, and

JODY SWILKY

FLOATING

The warehouse cracks open
like a tunnel. The night shift
trades goodbyes, but one man,
who lives alone, doesn't walk home.
The light against the blinds
keeps him tossing in bed.
All day crates pound on pallets.

He prefers resting in the sand,
where the women resemble Spanish girls
he's seen in magazines,
where the sun burns his skin
and the soothing laughter of women
is like water dripping down his body.

When he closes his eyes,
he hears soft voices
floating in the waves, heat and sand,
the landscape of the Mediterranean.
But as he sinks into sleep,
he thinks of other men
patting him firmly on the back
and feels only his hand
warming his moist thigh.

Stephen and how she is feeling alive. Whole. Strong. She asks how is Andrew.

Lark is a man of simplicity. He is a doctor of foresight. He is not given to excess verbiage.

"Andrew is as well as can be expected. His sickness differs in nature from yours. Yours can be described as acute, while his might be considered chronic. You were very good for Andrew in the hospital. He hardly knew what to do with himself after your release. Do not make plans for yourself and Andrew. He is not someone to build a relationship with. He would not be husband material for you."

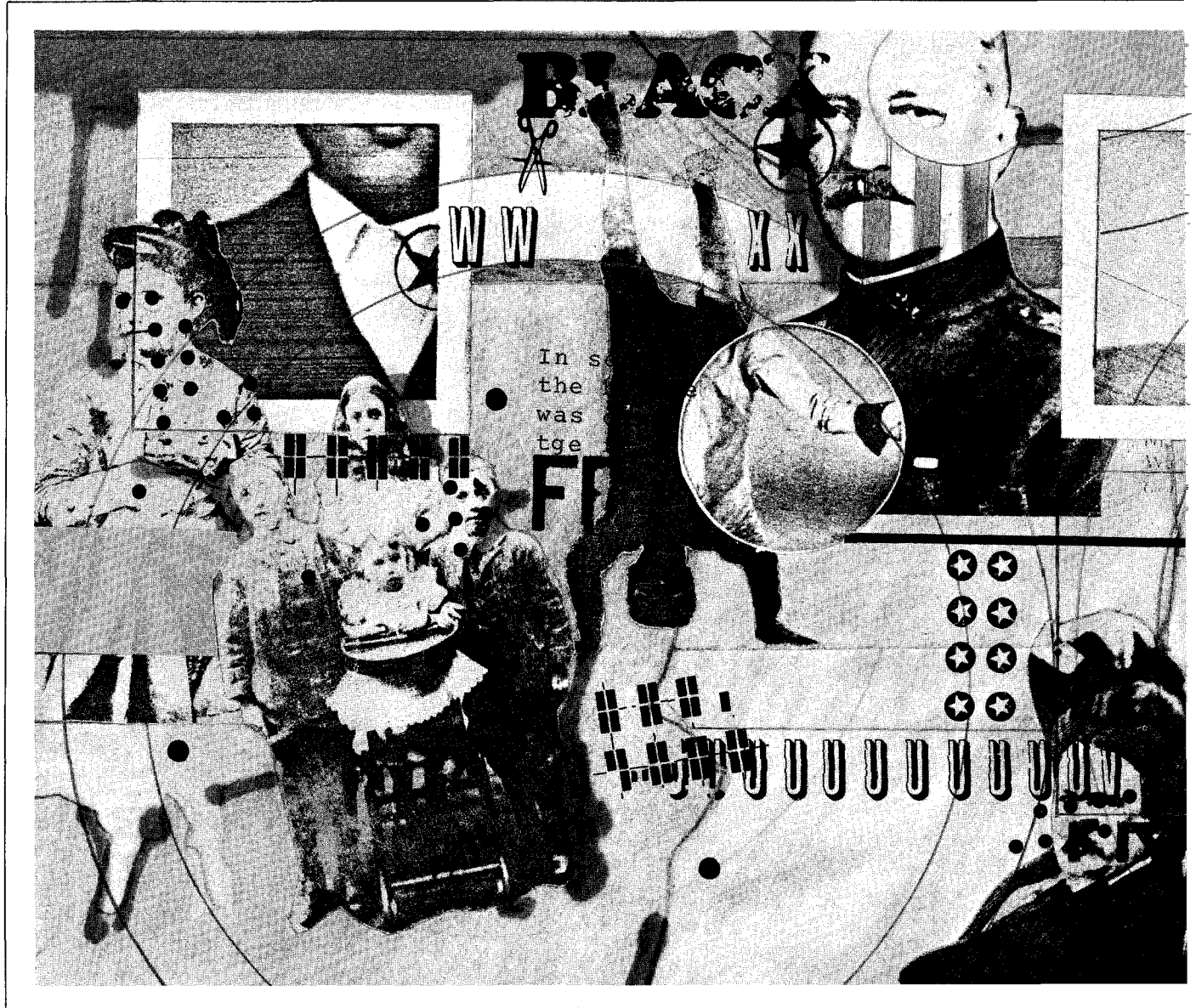
Marie has two minutes to decide if she should be silent or shout. She decides against silence.

"You are arrogant. You do not know everything. So much of what I remember about getting better is rooted in Andy. I felt more sense and sanity with him than in all your pills and potions."

They look at each other like two prize fighters.

On the way out, Marie pays ten dollars on her bill. She counts the number of payments and steps to the ground floor. She figures three hundred dollars would buy a lifetime of pizza. □

LEE K. ABBOTT, JR., holds a 1980-81 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This story is from his collection, *The Heart Never Fits Its Wanting*, published this month by the NAR.



WHAT JESUS SAYS

Lee K. Abbott, Jr.

The rest of us rattled in aboard the Quads, sweaty horses, and that one chugging Peerless, klaxons hooting, Winchesters popping like firecrackers. You could hear the din for miles, I'm sure.

"What's Jesus say?" The General was standing on the hood while around him was hugger-mugger and suffering. This was November, 1917, the Expedition a splendidly unscientific undertaking. We were all ruffians, hooligans and vandals, some youngsters like me. The General was my example.

"Jesus says Madness and Love." These were sentiments we learned from *Wild West Weekly* and the current literature, particularly *The Lustful Turk* from which General Pershing read to us nightly. "This is the first war in our new era," he was yelling, "may it be the best."

In seconds the battle was over, the forty of us exhausted but giddy with victory. The final count: three banditos dead, the rest running for their lives in the still freezing desert morning, and one captured, a thirteen year old who called himself Chief Coyote Iguano. (He'd been to Indian School in Albuquerque and knew the virtues of surrender.)

Forthwith we had to report.

"What'd you find, soldier?" General Jack sat on a camp stool, smoking an Egyptian Deity, his campaign hat pulled low on his forehead. "I believe in drama and enigma," he'd said one time, "and the artful pose of authority."

One fellow said he found a device for making dimples and other examples of degeneracy, including a crate of folding windscreens and two Gabriel Exhaust Horns. Villa was famous for looting and plunder.

"And you?" The General was looking at the buckaroo next to me.

"I found sin and travesty and French party gowns,"

The General was impressed.

"And you, boy," he said to me, "what's your name?"

"Dickey," I said. "H.L. Horace LaVerne. You can call me Tump." I told him I found contraband and assorted booty, particularly a supply of Noiseless Vacuum Pump Toothpicks.

"What's Jesus say, Tump?"

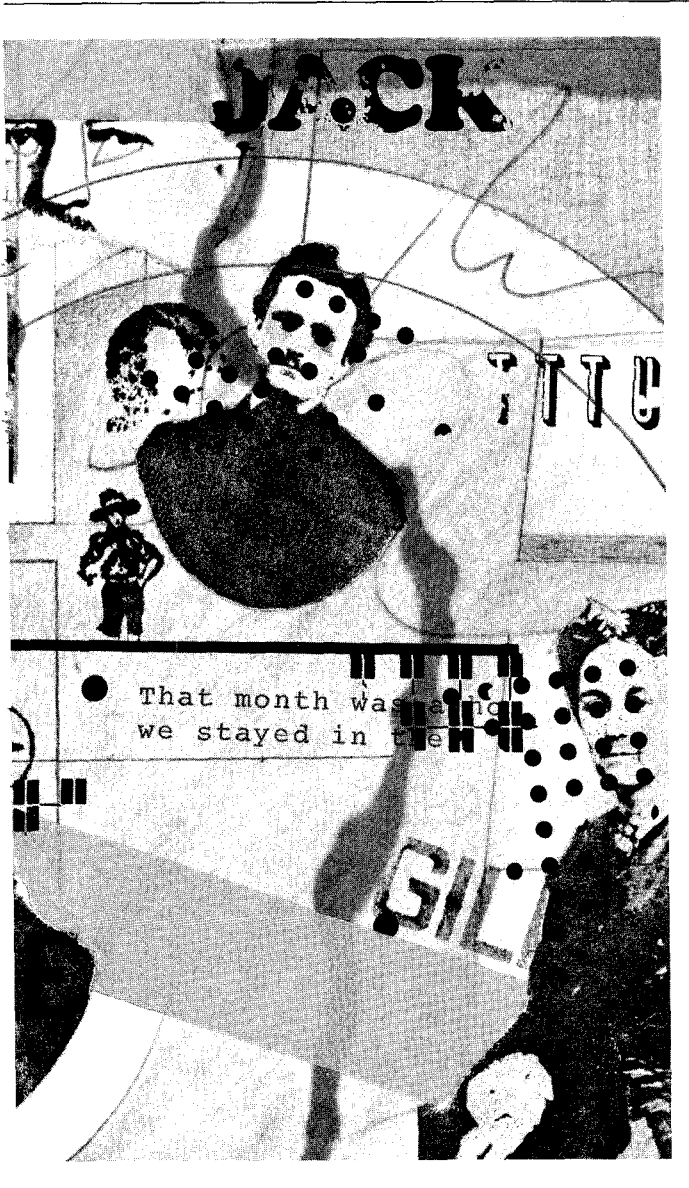
I stood up straight and told him: Villainy and Heartlessness and Cruelty and Human Want and Pity and True Wisdom; he stopped me before I mentioned Frontier Philosophy and Irony.

That month was a horror: we stayed in the badlands for nineteen days, hundreds of miles from Camp Furlong in New Mexico. We went here and there, of course, dashing in rag-tag order from one rumor to another. You'd hear that Villa was in Finito del Sieto and off you'd go, trucks grinding across that inhospitable desert, your sand-goggles pitted, sometimes stumbling across your own field wire and rusted, forsaken ordnance.

I was twenty then and unused to such hardships; but I was bright and quickly adapted.

"You boys," the General used to say every night, "you're the hope and glory of this Expedition. I have faith in your gumption and your inner reserves of vigor."

Rabble we were and rouse us he did. He told the



We hit them at sun-up, their periphery people being sleepyheads and no-account simpletons. General Jack—no one called him Black back then—swept in from the flank, riding the trembling fender of his 1914 Dodge touring car, his face glowing with fury and gringo vengeance.

"Sing it, men!" he hollered; immediately, we went into "Gasoline Gus and His Jitney Bus."

"Makes them jittery," General Jack allowed. "Teaches them wit and foreign mores."

gunslingers among us that they were soldiers in the Army of Truth; scoundrels were heroes, and everybody was the personal favorite of President Wilson.

"Woody writes me every day," he'd say, whipping a letter from his blouse. "Dear Jack and your band of young Americans," the General read. "I spend my time with dandies and diplomats and elegant ladies, but my heart is with you in the dire landscape of Mexico. Europe is a mess and Washington a scandal, but Edith and I are confident you will apprehend the cutthroat Villa and make the world a better place."

To be true, we got letters from Villa, too. One was brought by a tawdry female in lace-up shoes with kidney heels. This was December, so we'd be gone soon, shipped to Europe to fight the Kaiser or returned, manfully, to our error-filled ways. Me excluded.

"Jack, you fool," the letter said. You could tell some captured cowpoke or talented greaser nincompoop wrote it for him. "I'm told you're using idea and gringo imagination to inspire your tropas. Ha-ha, on my side I've world opinion and hungry boys. Regards, the Lion of the North."

Immediately, the General doubled the watch, sending the flint-eyed and crafty on patrol. The rest of us boxed or played baseball or wished for sex.

"Your enemy's a subtle bugger," the General said. "He'll use anything—modern convenience, fear, guile—to turn you from the righteous and steadfast. The Moros did that. They were Arab bad guys and I whipped the whole Philippines into a frenzy over them and their pre-historic habits."

We were riff-raff but in awe.

"It is my belief," he said, "that complex countries wage complex wars. To win, you got to be as complex as the best of your adversaries."

We became wily and mysterious. It was thrilling to see an ordinary desperado become as recondite and contrary as a Texas Congressman.

"I know Villa from my Colonel days," General Jack said. He and Pancho were together in El Paso in 1907. Villa was then only the Puma of the Sierras. "He believes in death everlasting, Indian motorcycles and three wishes for every ignorant soul."

By X-mas we were all doleful and solemn. I wrote my Daddy in Brownsville that I was virile and in my prime but still unfulfilled as a warrior. His letter came back lickety-split: "Tump, I am displeased. I read the papers every day. The General's words are truthful and wise. Get me a Mexican. Your mother says Howdy."

On New Year's they bushwhacked us. It was me, a rough-rider named Slick Watts, an Illinois intellectual named Fairwhistle, and Chief Coyote Iguano. The Chief was a turncoat, now on our side because of glamorous uniforms and frequent victories. "I know habits and dispositions," he said that morning when the General sent us out. "I read desert like open book. Know clues and have insights into thinking of Lion of North. He's a fatso and requires regular meals."

By noon we were 20 miles south of Agua Prieta, deep in alien cactus and cursing our fortunes.

"Think of Plato, fellas," Fairwhistle was saying. "Take the Long View. Think of this as Opportunity and Golden Blessedness." He was well into Discipline and Self-Examination when we heard them—the guerrillos.

"Invading Gringos!"

We froze, alert and shivering.

"Old tactic," the Chief whispered, "designed to intimidate and make you regret." He rode ahead, waving bye-bye. "I take look-see, bring back useful information and captives."

He got three yards before the bullets hit him.

"Oh, shit," he said, flying off his horse, twitching a bit. He looked surprised and truly offended. Then he was dead.

"Excuse me," Fairwhistle said. "We have spotted the foe and our mission is complete."

A hundred yards ahead you could see the bad guys, maybe a dozen, waving rifles and pistoles and hurtling toward us in a tempest. I didn't know if Villa was among them or not.

"I ain't here anymore," said Fairwhistle, shedding education and privilege like old clothes. "You don't see me, I'm invisible and vamoosed this very minute. Good bye and good fortune." He jerked his horse in the opposite direction, boot heels flying, lashing with his hat like a riding whip. "I'm young still. All my exploits have been lies or stolen from cheap novels. I say adios to gallantry and bravado. I haven't got the wit for this. Ain't fear, uh, horrible?"

Slick Watts had his carbine out, pumping shots into the on-rushing Mexicans. "Mozos," he was hollering, "criminals, puta-suckers, queers."

Bullets were kicking up all around, spooking my horse. "Whoa!" I said. That animal looked at me, I swear, with lunacy plain in his eyes. His name was Sport, a sure-footed nag. "Beast," I said, "be strong. I'm scared, too." Then I heard a plud-plud and felt that dumb friend shudder, drop his head and fall out from under me.

By now Slick Watts must've been single-minded and blind with panic. "Boom-boom," he was saying. Clearly, he was out of bullets or foolish. "Rat-tat-tat. Powie!" He raised up, shook his fist, and a bandito dived onto him with a screech, the two of them fatal and rolling in the dust.

I was crazed, scooting from bush to bush, my glands pumping.

You could still hear Fairwhistle, yowling in headlong retreat: "Grit, boy! You got it, I ain't."

It was here I went down. Clubbed, or cold-cocked, or stunned by a ricochet. One second I was popping up, teeth clenched, a villain in my sight, then I was down, darkness settling over my face, saying to myself, "You've been a decent boy, Tump, mannerly and a sweetheart. Pray the next face you see is smiling and floating in the mists of the here-after."

"I am original," he told me when I awoke. It was Pancho Villa, robber and murderer. We were in a bullet-riddled field tent, a million miles—I thought—from humanity. "I am mouth-breather, you know." It was dusty and close-smelling with all his number one banditos

humped up in there with us. They were a raggedy bunch. "I have big plans—tanks and expensive weapons. I have girlfriends. Wives, also. I do not put credence in sentiment and love words."

He opened a letter and read to me:

"To whom it may concern: this is the most naïve evil-doing brigand I ever met. He's a stone, but mirthful. He is without respect and mocks strategy. I have seen him spit on tactics almost poetic. I am exasperated. Help. Spare me any more heroes like Mr. Villa. Signed: Sincerely, John Joseph Pershing, Col. USA, Ft. Bliss, Texas, 1907. P.S. Mr. Villa believes in night-crawling and taking advantage."

"I am not frightened," I said. "It is my sworn duty to escape and wreak havoc."

That afternoon we went into Agua Prieta and Villa showed me off to everybody. The locals were for chopping me up. They said I was a colonialist and an insignificant work of God. It was grim.

"No, no, no," Villa said. He told them I was misguided, a joy to my momma probably, and a stupido.

You could see the ignorance lift from their faces.

"You have made big impression," Villa told me, leading me away. He hustled me into a cantina, finally into a back room. "They think maybe you have three heads and eat children." A couple of his banditos tied my hands and feet. "You be good, Tump."

By nightfall, he and his hombres were drunk and celebrating in the next room. There'd be silence, then pistoles would go off. Somebody would laugh, then there'd be oaths: *Mata los gringos! Death, death!* "Tump," I said to myself, "what will you do now?" I imagined General Pershing talking to me: "You will hoodwink these cowardly butchers," he'd say, "and I will put medals all over your chest and shoulders. You will be sustained in your hours of need by pluck and innate goodness."

Once, General Villa came in to see me. I was scrunched up in a corner, trying to undo my hands when the door blasted open. His face was as bright as a tomato.

"I am sad for my men," he said. They were boys, not muy malo hombres. They did not have his experience. "I been mule-skinner, horse thief, legendary bandito. I am used to defeat. I know betrayal by first name. My boys, they are in this for glory and tests of manhood. What you for?"

I told him: Pride and Victory. Just like General Jack said.

Toward midnight, I escaped, worked my hands free, undid my feet and loosened the boards covering the only window. Next door, the banditos were still in an uproar, but I slipped out unnoticed, the night barely lit by a sliver of old moon.

"Tump," I could hear Pershing saying, "I am amazed at your industry and resourcefulness."

I got only a hundred yards or so before I heard the shooting. My absence had been, it seemed, discovered. It was a depressing town, adobe and dirt, spread out in disorder and carelessness. Now, I heard running and shouting, and I, tried and unfed, scuttled from one scrub-covered mound to another, till I lay low, breathing hard and figuring the possibilities.

Pancho himself came looking for me.

I am now 87 and virtually bed-ridden in the Veterans' Hospital in Hurley, New Mexico. Around me are vets from the big wars, Korea, and late-comers from Vietnam. Some are crippled, without arms or legs or brains; and some are like me, infirm, old with tired and hard hearts. But: I can still see Villa, holding a kerosene lantern by his face, trudging up a dusty street, his expression pitiful and understanding.

"Ah, Tump," he said that night. We could've been on the moon, him and me, the only two bodies in the universe.

"You got big plans," he was saying. He had big plans, too. He was going to be Presidente of all Mexico. He'd cut the head off Caranza, that pig, and sit in the thrones, and everybody would go to school. He'd crank up the engine of history and feed Mexico in from one end; out the other would come a new order and fat, free babies.

To be true, I would tell him now, I was having a youth dream—modern and hopeless. "Tump," I was thinking, "you're handsome, you could be an actor"—I'd seen Louise Fazenda and Wallace Reid—"You could be a heartbreak to plenty. You can dance, show your muscles. I see you as a caballero or a swashbuckler. You got the temperament for lasting fame." I was at least ten generations away from the present despair.

On the one side, Villa was saying, was the desert—endless, certainly cruel. "By day, everything burns up. At night, another story—muy frijo. And animals, bugs, ugly birds. You could lose your mind, not be happy."

He was standing not ten paces from my hiding spot, and I could feel my ribs begin to close around my heart in fear.

On the other side, he said, was captivity. "Maybe I could work on your mind. You could be a spy, infiltrate."

For a long time, I sat, growing stiff and grinding my teeth. Once, I looked up; Villa was sitting, too, glum-faced and almost sad. You could nearly smell the doom in him.

"Ha-ha," he said at last, "I am in revolution for money and mortal adventure."

It was then I gave up. I was a fraidy-cat maybe—but no good to anybody, dead or seriously handicapped.

They were possessed, Villa and his wily soldados. Tati, Memo, The Butcher Fierro, Cruz—they were wild youths, planning for the future. You could hear 'em outside, their talk full of spit and violence, every allegiance sworn on the hide of this or that low-down gringo. Then, off they'd storm, grumbling, their souls dark and pushed to the edge of meanness.

The second week in January they hit the trail again, me in tow, my hands tied to the saddle pommel of a burro named The Bank of Mexico. I thought of Sport, my good dumb horse now rotted or eaten. Villa said he was moving in the extreme regions of the human spirit. "I take my direction from impulse and native cunning." He was the Lion of the North, all right, leading us through cactus and waste, quietly and without special urgency.

"I am not scared anymore," I told him one day. "I have cleaved to duty and honor. My Daddy can be proud."

His face went dark. "You know the earth is hollow, no?" I shook my head and he told me there were underground ships propelled by clockwork; that there were two suns and two moons and networks of roads lit by gas lamps. He told me about his present and future wives, his proposed museum. He said he loathed double-dealing and back-stabbing, had friendly relations with the Chinese of Chihuahua, and thought well of probity, hard work, and fatherhood.

"Why are you telling me this?"

"To give me wholeness in your eyes, make you love me."

Next day we saw Pershing. Villa's point man came hustling back with the news, his eyes thyroid. Evidently, we were on parallel routes, General Jack and us, but separated by a line of hills. By dusk, they were bivouacked and so were we. They had fire; we had none. They were noisy; we were not. Attack was out of the question, so spying was the compromise. Villa took me along with him, my hands bound and somebody's neckerchief tied over my mouth.

We tippy-toed up a hill, stealthful, our blood aroused by danger.

"—temped o'er with mere trepidation, the hollow verities—" Pershing was reading. Poetry. You could see the rapt buckaroos around him, their faces glazed in the firelight. "What's that say, boys?"

"Envy and failure!" It was Fairwhistle, the one who'd abandoned me. "Its themes are waste and human dread."

The next sentence mentioned history and Moslem orthodoxies and an undone dusky maiden. General Jack went into it like a true soldier, stern and unforgiving, but came out weak and almost silly, his voice giving out with a pop.

"I am touched," Villa said to me. "Here, feel my heart."

The following night was the same thing. There was drill and inspection and upkeep of ordnance and mighty lessons in rue and self-esteem. All the troopers were slick but gaunt, maybe wise in another universe.

"Villa's large but ignorant," General Jack was saying. The Lion and I were sitting behind a stand of Spanish Needle, listening closely.

"He's strong, too. A big eater. I admire, truly, his capacity and zeal. He was, I expect, actually nice at one time. He can be polite, I'm told. But where is his moral vision?"

Nobody knew.

"It's the self which wins and loses," Pershing said. "And the self which wins is the self which eschews the base and low-life."

Then it was over, the Punitive Expedition. One day they were there, Peerless trucks moving in a straight line behind the General's battered Dodge, plowing through the sand; the next day, they were gone, as if they'd been swallowed underground. A week passed. And another. And then a private message was printed in the Mex newspaper *El Fronterizo*. The Lion read it to me: "You can let my brave man or men go. I have been called away to fight villainy in Europe. I have two pieces of advice: 1) buy

your men uniforms—it gives them stature; 2) write down your battle plans—strategy redeems and gives historians true accounts of your devious thinking. Regards, John Joseph Pershing, Gen., USA."

I saw General Pershing once again, 1948, the year he died. He was the speaker at a VFW convention in Ft. Worth. He was a coot himself, once pretty from all those past triumphs; but, on the stage of the Freemont Hotel ballroom, he looked as feeble and wrinkled as the rest of us.

Fairwhistle was there too, dandy and spectacularly intelligent.

"I have lived with you in my mind all these years," he said.

"Don't," I said. I told him that since my release in 1918 and repatriation, I had never looked back, only forward. I farmed and traveled and went broke a hundred times, married for beauty once, had three living children and voted Democrat. "So don't live with me," I said. "Put me out of your mind." I was fifty-one and hung with philosophy. "See me as you did last, my arms flailing, my heart beating in panic and disappearing into the bosom of the enemy. Say bye-bye to me, Mr. Fairwhistle."

There were tears—guilt and all that time thinking ill of himself. "I have been blue, too," he said. "Bye-bye."

When the General spoke, we hushed. There were doughboys, one old pooper from Pershing's days in the Philippines, and some of us from the Expedition. He was marvelous, of course—truly Black now.

"I've lived long and right," he said, the PA doing a fair job of capturing the ire and strength in his sentiment. "I remember everything—my first horse, my first command, my first footrace with a Nebraska Indian. I remember valor and spurn the odd setback."

Oh, those Belleau boys and Argonne vets were a quiet, respectful bunch, a couple near me almost transported with gleeful regard.

"I remember cold and it invigorates me," he was saying. "I remember heat and it comforts." He spoke for an hour, I recall, his face rock-hard and gleaming with conviction. He mentioned hardship, hardship, hardship. He said it was good, good, good. He mentioned wisdom and hewing to the good works. He ended, of course, with Jesus.

"What's Jesus say?" he called.

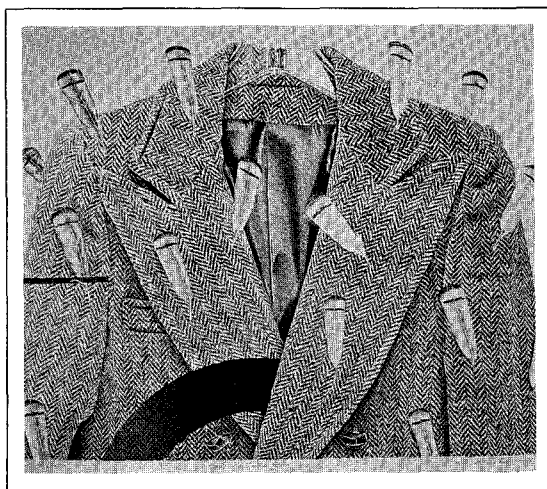
And all of them, now empty of any thought but the General's, were on their feet, those that could. "Ideal," they were shouting. "Charity. Helpful Natures."

Indeed, it went on: Goodness of every kind—Sense, Fine Manners, Correct Posture, Diet.

I refrained, you can tell. I refrained, too, when he died and through the years. I have refrained and refrained but would tell him now, if he were to fall out of heaven and land in this chair beside my bed, that Jesus says none of that. No, Black Jack. Jesus says: lie and be happy. Get shrewdness and avoid shame. Last of all, act tough and pick wisely among the world's truths for something that don't disappoint or diminish with time. You have a place; maintain it, then pass it on.

Then I, too, would die. And start over again. □

A FIRE IN OCTOBER



Mary Peterson

Although it was early October, and warm, Joyce asked Roger, her husband, to build a fire with the birch logs. Then she rummaged through the box of Christmas things until she found the children's red felt stockings. She needed them for the picture. They had been made from scratch by her mother, and trimmed with fat silver rick-rack along their edges, and topped with thick cotton batting, and they had never held anything larger than a candy cane. (On Christmas mornings, the children found their stocking presents *under* the stockings, as though—through jolly largesse—Santa had brought gifts too large to be stuffed.)

Already this morning she had washed Rochelle's hair, and Brian's too, and decided they were clean enough from their baths of the night before. She had dressed Rochelle in her blue gingham cotton dress with the high puffed sleeves—the one that was made by her grandmother—and Brian in a white turtleneck top and corded striped pants in shades of brown and olive and green and tan. She had told them they must sit and read, and not mess up, until the picture was taken.

When she came downstairs with the stockings, the fire was licking over the three fireplace logs. Roger was poking at it with the brass-headed fireplace tool.

"It's getting there," he said, his back to her.

She looked at the pitiful flames. "I want the fire to *show*," she said.

He was a good-looking boyish man who was losing hair at his temples now, and there were certain things about him she didn't know and would never know, such as that when they were first dating he had quite improbably found himself necking with Joyce's good friend Karen on the living room couch of somebody's apartment late at night, and everybody else was gone, and he and Joyce weren't engaged, and he'd wanted irresponsibly to make love to Karen but she had pulled away and gone to sit at the apartment window. He had said, "God, Karen, why couldn't it have been you instead?" It was the most spontaneous and ardent thing he had ever said in his life.

Joyce watched the back of his head, his trim spikey haircut. He still looked young, although small spidery lines were coming around his honey brown eyes, and when he was home from the Bank in the evening his face was tired. She wondered, Are we middle-aged yet?

"There it goes," he said from the fireplace. And the fire was licking up hotly, turning the white curled bark of the perfect birch logs to charred brown, then quickly black, and he leaned forward feeling the heat.

Joyce went to the fireplace screen and hung the red stockings, one on each side, from their little silver hooks. She stepped back, considering. Her camera was waiting on the end table beside the soft leatherette recliner, and even the flashbulbs were attached.

She framed the picture. Then she put the Instamatic down again and moved the black-painted metal bucket with extra birch logs closer to the fireplace. She would get the children in the middle, with the fire going between their heads, and one Christmas stocking on either side, and to Brian's left the black-painted bucket of logs, and to Rochelle's right the empty wicker magazine basket. She had moved it in to balance the picture, along with the small metal Negro in the corner on the flat brick hearth, and the standing fireplace tools on the other side. Lastly she noticed that the gilded American eagle was centered over everything. Taking the picture, she would be sure she had all the eagle. But she would have dropped the camera a bit to get the children's knees, and its head would be outside the frame, and only its wide wings would be over them.

"Rochelle," she called. "Brian." She waited. "Where are the children?" she asked her husband.

"They were in the kitchen," he said, stretching.

She didn't find them in the kitchen or in their rooms either, and when she finally came back to the living room there they were on the couch, Rochelle with a picture book and Brian sitting in front of the television set.

"Stand in front of the fireplace," she commanded.

"Oh, Mom," Brian said. But Rochelle was a good girl and did as she was told, and then Brian went there too.

"Kneel down," she said. "Put your arms at your sides."

They knelt. She looked at them through the view finder. It was all very complicated and she kept moving them a bit to one side or another. She did not notice, asking them to say "cheese" for the third and fourth and fifth times, how Rochelle had that look of a little girl who wishes to please, or how Brian had the look of a little boy gone inward already, though he was only nine.

She was eighteen when she started dating Roger, and that was after she had gone steady for two years with Jamie who had made love to her in the back seat of his old Plymouth, who had used rubbers and called them "Trojans" no matter what brand they were, and had thrown them out the steamy windows afterwards. Jamie was a football player, although he was short. He had a bad complexion and muscular arms and a nervousness about him, but he said he loved her and she was crazy about him; he said he would marry her after graduation and she was sure he meant it. She wore his school ring on a chain that dropped it exactly between her breasts, and it bounced when she ran up and down the stairs. Boys in the hallways kept bumping her with their elbows to see if she was real or padded. It was all real but she didn't think of herself as sexy. Girls in small Minnesota towns buy lacey panties because that is what girls do. They make love with their boyfriends on back roads or inside stands of Norway pine, with half a fifth of blackberry brandy and the mosquitoes trying to get in the windows of the old Plymouth, the Chevy, the Ford. Thinking about it too much made you cheap. Everyone just did it, around the time they were juniors in high school, just as all the girls remarked who wore bras or who got her period first, and everybody looked with interest at everybody else in the shower room after gym class. Karen and Barbara and Judy and Joyce and Ramona and Alice. The back roads and lakeside roads of small Minnesota towns were littered with grey condoms and emptied sweet bottles of liquor and half-smoked Camel cigarettes and cans of beer. There was nothing else to do but to drive up and down Main Street in cars that were raked and channelled and scalloped, and shout at friends standing around outside the Stratte Drug, or at others hanging out at the Root Beer Stand up near the edge of town. To lay a patch of rubber out of the Root Beer Stand parking lot and down Main Street.

"You can get up," she said to the children. "Go change, if you want." The shine from washing was still on their hair, and like puppies they were young enough to smell dusty warm.

Joyce had had, in her own language, her "fling." Her fling had lasted exactly three years and had involved getting drunk (only a few times) and sleeping with two boys, which seemed to her very wicked, and marrying the second one. Now she was a married woman nearly thirty years old, living in her home town, holding a pocket camera and looking at a fire.

Roger, who had gotten her pregnant not long after they were dating, and who had married her as he should, was outside on the front lawn starting the mower. In another three weeks, by Halloween, they might have their first frost.

The living room was warming from the fire and the deep shag carpet held the heat, and she went into the kitchen to get away from it, making sure first that the screen was firm, and taking down the stockings. She had already looked over the selection of cards. The one she liked best read, "Silent Night," in big scrolly letters, and would have the picture and their four names on the bottom in simple block print. She would order thirty-five of them, she thought, or perhaps fifty.

Roger moved on, shearing the grass. The sweet broken grass smell came through the kitchen windows. Spears of damp green stuck to his loafers. Each time he mowed, he followed the same pattern weaving his way back and forth over his property, the shuttle of the mower grinding its narcotic familiar racket, smelling of gasoline. He hated to mow the lawn but he did it.

"Watch the bushes!" Joyce yelled from the window.

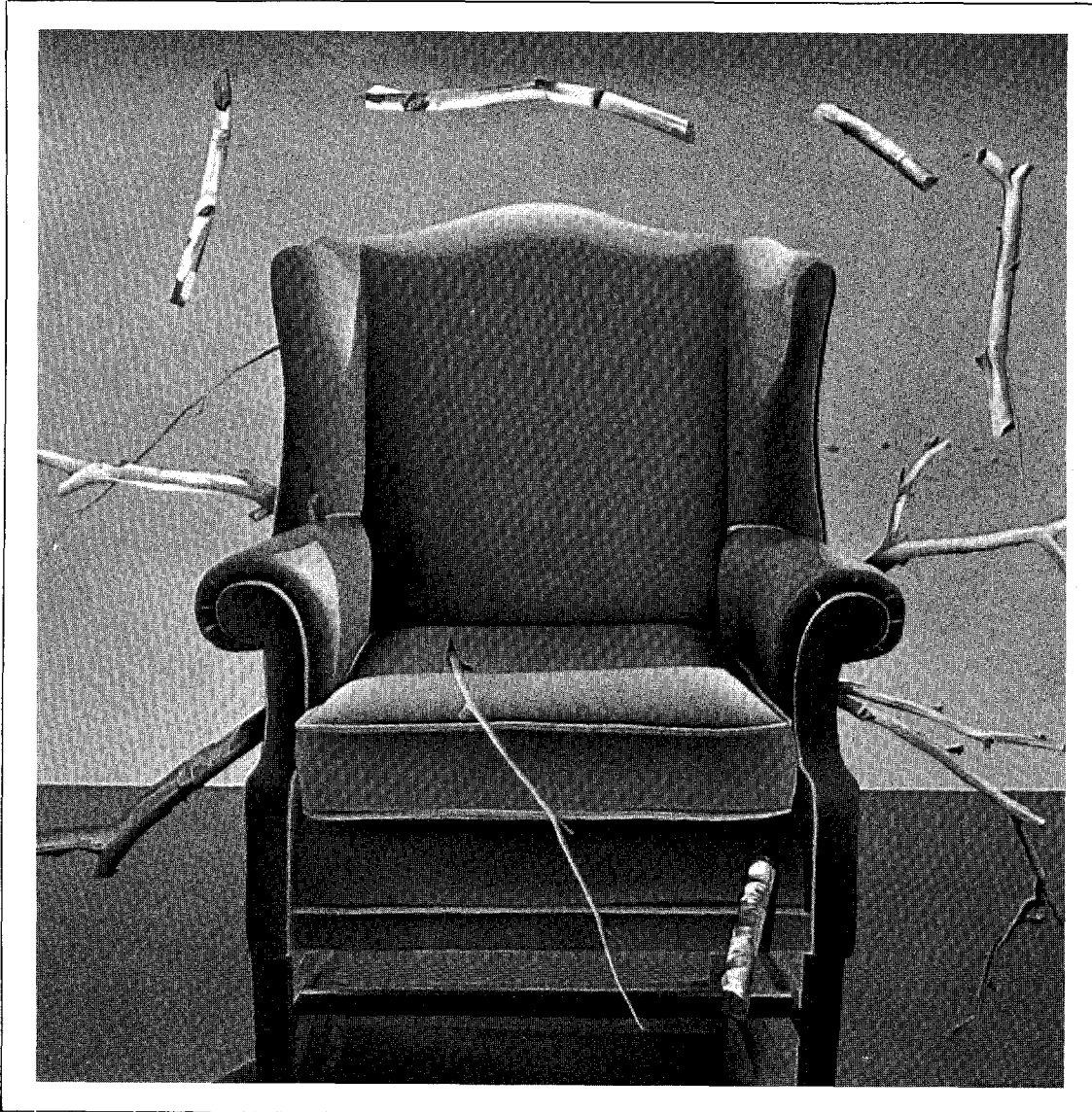
She returned to her list, all neatly numbered, where—along with the names of uncles and cousins, his family and hers—was the name of her old friend Karen. Somehow Joyce still knew Karen's address, and she would send the picture off. Karen would receive it, look at it, turn it over checking for a signature, and finally stick it in a current book to mark her page.

Years later, Karen would come home from work and take down, again, the same book, and find the picture and wonder when it was taken, since it was not dated, and think suddenly back. Work tired her. She liked to relax, at home, with a glass of wine, and talk to her cat. She would prop the picture up against the pepper grinder and remember. In grade school she and Joyce had passed notes and had pushed Andrew off the bleachers, and broken his arm, and promised never to tell Mrs. Gamble. But they had been caught and punished anyhow, as two years later, in junior high, for whispering secrets in choir practice, and for smoking in the girls' bathroom on the second floor in high school. Karen had dated Michael, and Joyce had dated Jamie. Sometimes they doubled to the Hilltop Drive-In Movie, the boys trying to sneak the girls in under a blanket in the back seat. She remembered those careening, divergent years afterwards, when she went to college and Joyce didn't, when she left Minnesota and moved to Boston: espresso coffee in cafes after the theatre, sweet drinks in dark bars decorated with leaded glass and Tiffany lamps and mahogany, croissants and the Sunday *Times* in the Patisserie, and men. Other men. Years of men, not so many but it seemed to Karen perhaps too many, certainly more than Joyce would understand. Not to give the easy, false idea that Karen used Joyce as a touchstone for her life, a marker for her tidal history, since she did not do that. Only that sometimes she saw a color in a fabric store, or something in a window, or heard an inflection in a store clerk's voice, and she thought of Joyce. It made her sad.

She made a good salary now as an Administrative Assistant. "The Midwest," someone had said, "is like the Russian provinces, sending talent to both coasts." Was that so? She had had psychiatrists. She had got rid of her Midwestern accent. Raises at work buoyed her. She had put the photographs of family reunions, church suppers, her parents, her grandparents, in a box deep in the closet. She had authority over typists and secretaries, and she wore tailored expensive suits, and she enjoyed long lunches on Fridays. She enjoyed this good, flinty Bordeaux. She would never arrange children for a Christmas photograph, nor keep in her apartment cast-iron statuettes of Negroes, nor haul up wicker baskets empty of magazines to exactly balance a photograph. She knew it, and unlike Roger and Joyce she remembered, and she held to it like a faith. □

GRAVITY

Catherine Petroski



On one of his quadrille pads she has scribbled her kind of scientific note: Of the differences in the paths of falling leaves. Of primitives.

Here is recorded how the elm leaf turns over and over, yellow in the sham summer day of autumn. Of the oaks it is said that their leaves are like clean, timeless sheets of paper. Of the catalpa, how its leaves meander side to side, the broadest face of all to the air below, resistance creating resistance. It is the oldest story on earth and always ends the same: Irresistible force (earth, leaf), please meet immovable object (leaf, earth). But, she remembers, no reflections. Just raw data. Science.

Well then, details of the dainty maple, spiralling on the axis of its stem, drilling the air, a visual echo of the

maple seed's twin green wings in spring. On the quadrille grid she reconstructs the equation of elms cut in mid-summer. No one has told the seeds in their paper cases that they are the seeds of doom. They will volunteer next year, and in the autumn's garden beds they sleep the sleep of hope. Final note: the great slow oak, the acorn, which drops directly.

Across the street, a white-haired man in tweeds sweeps the first of fall from his entry. Puffing on his prize meerschaum, he is autumn at ease. In this village an ordinance forbids the burning of leaves.

In the den her husband reads. A spiral of wire leads from his headphones to the blue glow of the tuner. He has

become a puzzle to her, as perhaps she has to him. She knows neither what goes on in his head nor to what he is listening. Vivaldi. Willie Nelson. Anything, but nothing by halves. The attraction is still there, still mutual.

All inhabitants are fed, all dishes are done. She does her best to have them live in a clock of a house. All floors are waxed, surfaces free of dust, offspring sleeping or feigning sleep, beds otherwise made to be unmade to be made. The clothing is clean, insofar as that is possible. Each day the dirty laundry descends to the basement via the chute. The next day these soiled items rise from the earth as if lighter than air, seeking their rightful places, defying gravity, blasted off by chlorines and phosphates.

She notes that man measures his advancement by his ability to defy the laws of nature.

She pushes one switch, ON. She pushes another, RUN PROGRAM.

It is evening and she is alone. She holds a small hand calculator and inserts a narrow strip of magnetically encoded plastic. The machine hums it through its card reader. The program emerges from the other side of the calculator. The display lights up, CRD. She turns the card over and feeds its second side to the machine.

Feeding the machine reminds her of the two supposedly sleeping children. The younger, a boy, does not like school, or so he claims. He worries too much about his image, and she worries that he is too young to let images get in the way of the truth. And how can someone five years old hate half the human race, as he claims to. Daily it grows more difficult telling what is real with him. With the girl, it's easy. To her, her daughter's deceptions are transparent, though that may be because their deceptions are the same. Her husband finds his daughter otherwise. Her school cannot measure her, since she falls in the 99th percentile in everything and whenever possible soars off the top end of the scale into space. She probably finds her mother obtuse. Daughters always do. They aren't able to measure the boy either, how much he's playing for laughs. Before bed, he told of flying in the night, of just taking off from his windowsill. Of course, she told him. When you're older and can borrow grandpa's plane.

You're older, she tells herself. It's all right for you to do what you want. No one can ask any questions. Enjoy yourself. Take it easy. Relax. Play a game.

"The Lunar Landing Game," announces the calculator's manual. She never can remember the instructions.

"You are 350 feet off the surface of the moon, descending at a rate of 50 feet per second. The display will count down from 3, and when it reaches 0, you have 1 second in which to enter an even number of pounds of fuel to burn."

She knows if she manages to land safely, it will be only a matter of sheer luck and blind instinct. But if she does, does it matter how?

The fall wind is negligible, just as on the moon's

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surface there are no winds. The autumn has already done its due on the maples and box elders. The oaks' top branches cling tightly to their leaves, and she suddenly recalls seeing crowns of leaves on the oaks in the snow. In the night a siren wails, but this is not the season for tornados. In the street in front of their house a loud car rushes past, and it turns at the corner, screeching. Behind it comes the village police, siren, red light.

STOP, the calculator says. GO. It counts the seconds her space capsule falls, down, down, the surface of the moon coming up, up. 3-blink-blink, 2-blink-*think*, 1-think-think. Oh, what the hell, she says outloud, and punches seven.

What elms remain and the maples went first. As long as she can remember she has been a watcher of elms, starting with the twenty-some that shrouded her grandpa's house, deep green all summer and diamond ice all winter. Now afternoons across the street the white-haired man rakes what oak leaves his trees have given him, leading his harvest toward a meager windrow. For all she knows the old man knows everything there is to know. At the moment she cannot even think of his name, or if she ever knew it. Her son yells at him: Hey, Poopoo! and she hopes he has not heard. It appears he has not, and she wonders: Is yelling *hey poopoo* in the nature of boys as not appearing to have heard is in the nature of white-haired old men as falling is in the nature of leaves?

For the moment that question seems remote. She has just crashed on the lunar surface. The owner's manual continues: "To restart the game, enter A'. To stop the game, enter B'. The game may only be stopped for 5 seconds, but if the player wishes to resume more quickly, again enter A'."

The man in the next room listening to secret music, her husband, wrestles with a problem so complex only a handful of scientists realize it exists. In fact, it is one of his professional duties to create problems so that others may solve them. No wonder they have their days, she thinks. He brings home with him a portable computer terminal ("Sensitive Item: Property of U.S. Government" says its sticker) so he can use it at night. Night is the time when the big computer at the lab is not overwhelmed with jobs that have to be done last month. What does a person who makes notes on the falling paths of leaves do with one who orders the unordered, thinks the unthinkable, solves the unknown with a sensitive item? Other than make love.

ERROR, accuses her lunar landing display. Oh please, she thinks, tell me something I don't know. She switches the damned machine off, erases the program. The machine knows nothing now. It will not know anything until she tells it.

The white-haired man across the street knows something. He rakes now that he will not be forced to rake so much later. He knows it is silly to calculate for a wind, which might as easily sweep the leaves away from him as sweep all his neighbors' leaves onto his yard. He accepts as a primitive the concept of gravity, he assumes its continuity. Mobility is not in the vocabulary of his life, does not even occur to him, was unheard of, in his generation.

Oak man. Man long standing. By comparison we are the green ash, the silver maples flitting about. Fast growing. Shallow rooted.

Can anyone here calculate the value of G ?

Her husband has removed the headphones and quieted the mind of the FM receiver. Now he brings the terminal, the size of an attaché case and of an inconsequential grey color, to her desk. Where the quadrille paper is. Only it is about to be displaced. His portable terminal hooks into the main computer through the telephone. On the back of the terminal are two grey rubber cups called acoustical couplers, where the phone receiver fits. Otherwise the sensitive item looks like any electric typewriter.

He speaks: "May I use your phone. The kids are on mine." He already has the cover off the terminal and is plugging the three-prong adapter into the outlet.

"I thought the kids were in bed."

"No, Kitsy is talking to Lisa. Look, I can't sit around all day waiting in a queue for a job to be processed. I've got other things to do. Would you go grocery shopping at five o'clock?"

He has such a way with analogies, she thinks. "You know, your questions somehow aren't."

"Aren't what?"

"Aren't questions."

"Will you quit it? This is important. I don't ask often."

"True." He never asks. He tells, he states.

"My terminal has to talk to John's or they won't know what they're supposed to be doing tomorrow."

"Just what the kids say."

"I knew you'd say that. That's why I said it. Now would you just move some of this junk."

"Those are papers, my notes on the leaves. This is my desk."

"Won't take long. Just a couple of flags and a few minor adjustments to our new subroutine."

Just what the kids say, she thinks again. He dials the number of the laboratory computer access station and snuggles the receiver into the couplers. READY, the terminal types, and when he logs on with his code number and password, the machine tells him how much time he has used and how much time he has left. Together they go through the formalities of getting into the proper mode. He and the machine type at each other their coded dialogue of offs and ons, gates opening and shutting, counterfeiting thought. Yes-no, flip-flop. She wonders if there's really anything happening there, anything real.

When the fall rains came this afternoon, she inventoried on the quadrille pad the flora and fauna of the backyard. Someone before them here was crazy for maples, damn it. The maples are just about all they've got, and plenty of them. So many in fact she has named them. Today the crotch of the Bad Maple is stained black with fall's damp. The sides of its upstretched legs are dry, one of them green with a primitive growth of moss on its north side. The Spindly Maple is all wet, except for a small section near the base that is dry. A smear of unnatural green, a more mature moss, drips down its simple

pillar. High in the Complicated Maple the ragged fat rope of a years-ago swing diminishes each winter. The tree is open to the rawest of weather, far from the house. Next year, she thinks, we must get them all, the named and the unnamed, trimmed properly. Pausing on one of the branches, a squirrel clutches at the air before it, as if to keep from falling. Dead ferns collapse into themselves and feed their rhizomes with last summer's fodder. The fir seedling they planted by the barbecue pit has grown to an even shade of green, braced for the snow. And on and on. Fall in the suburbs. Tonight the leaves are soggy on the ground, the air is full of mist, and the wet streets hiss all day, all night.

But one more data point for the quadrille pad. This afternoon while she was taking inventory, just outside her window a bird flew down. At the same time, from nowhere another bird flew up. She expected at any moment to see the birds collide in midair and somehow atomize, disintegrate in a cloud of feathers. She would see the face of energy itself. And just then the phone rang. "Tom Lawless," said the dynamo they used for a broker. "It's your lucky day," he said. "Consolidated Light came down. I got your 300 at 13."

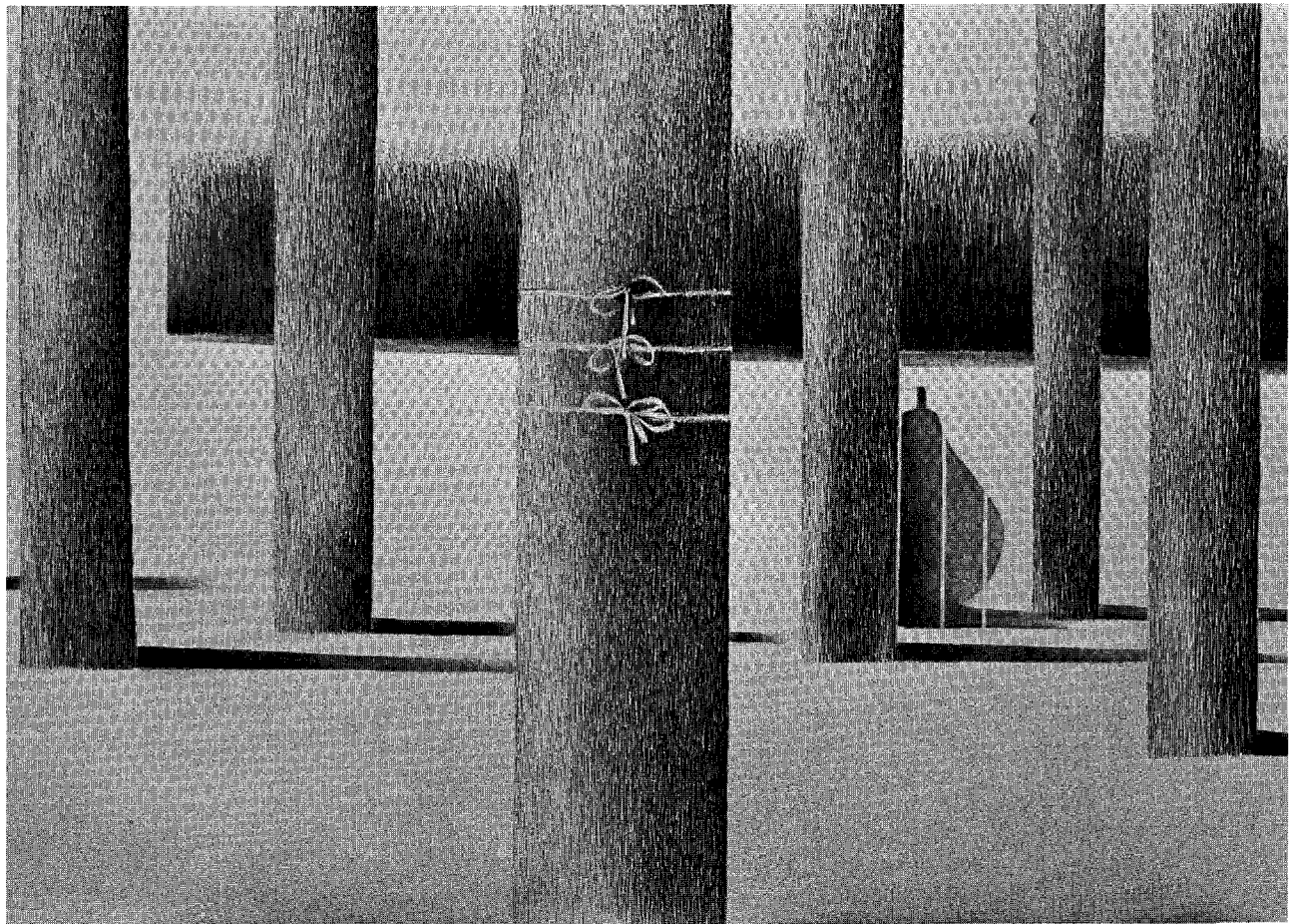
Now the night wind picks up, moaning a low sound in the gutter at the ell where the kitchen and breakfast room come together. Though her husband's specialty of specialties is neither acoustics nor wind tunnels, he always says the moan has to do with the big overhang. From there he always swings into his standard twenty-minute declamation on how much better-built older houses are, from the scientific point of view.

Science be hanged, she thinks. Enough of reasons. When people are happy, reasons don't matter. People wear themselves out, make themselves miserable, just to be logical and exquisitely defensible. Anything that matters just finally is, like the old man, like the seasons circling and spiralling down time. Our defenses and our attacks will change those things not one bit.

The moan in the kitchen corner is joined by another. It is a siren, and it is coming closer. The siren is joined by still another. A red light flashes up their driveway, hitting the garage door. Again and again it paints the same swath across the door. Another wreck. She wonders: Why do people give cars to absolute children? Why do people hurry so? Why do people get tight and try to drive? She remembers: There had been no thud, no screech of brakes, no crash of metal against metal or headlight against tree.

She hurries to the front of the house. Stopped across the street is a red emergency vehicle from the village fire department and a white Arrow ambulance with a gold band around it. The beacons turn mutely, striping the neighborhood again and again. The ambulance doors are open. The firemen and paramedics have gone into the house across the street. She knows what has happened, that she should not watch, that she does not want to watch, yet she watches. On a stretcher the men bring the white-haired man wrapped fat in blankets, no face showing, out the front door, down the front stairs, out the walk through the oaks' newly fallen leaves. □

Erica Leiderman



A BRIEF OUTLINE OF TERRORISM

for Sarah

Stachenberg had come to London alone this time to give a series of lectures on the history of terrorism. Sylvia, who had not seen him in two years, was surprised and pleased to hear that he was back and invited him over.

"He's like a father to me, really," she explained to Margarethe, her flat-mate, a tall, broad-shouldered heavy young woman, a daughter of the idle rich, who disclaimed the fact by giving part of her allowance to the IRA. She had long ropes of auburn hair, which she never cut, regardless of fashion. She rebelled openly, mostly to incite her parents, who called now and then, threatening to cut off her funds, though they never did. But despite her recalcitrance, or maybe because of it, she was more firmly rooted in life than Sylvia, at least enough to fasten Sylvia down when she was on the verge of floating off on the winds of her own mind. Sylvia had arabesqued her way out of the doldrums of her parents' middle-class lives almost completely, with no tears and no rancor, at least on her part. This was one of the reasons Margarethe had so taken to her: for Margarethe, no maneuver, choreographed or tactical, progressive or evasive, could rid her of five-hundred years of fox hunts, butlers and bone china.

Margarethe jabbed her crochet hook into the shawl she was working on and tossed a loose strand of hair back over her shoulder, looking at her friend. If left to her own devices, Sylvia would have been hit by the bus on Hyde Park Corner that very morning in her haste to cross over and look at a sculpture from yet another angle. Margarethe had wondered now and then whether Sylvia really was oblivious to everything or whether she was simply conforming to her own notion of how a life ruled by Terpsichore was run. It was a question to which she almost preferred not knowing the answer. Sylvia was spontaneous. That was all.

But the two women were close, so close in fact that they often joked about the difficulty they had distinguishing where Sylvia left off and Margarethe began.

When Stachenberg arrived with flowers and wine and only traces of his Prussian formality, it was raining. He hugged Sylvia even as she opened the door for him, not realizing until it was too late that he had forgotten about his raincoat, so that she was damp by the time he finished kissing her on both cheeks. He apologized profusely and stood for a moment, his chest and belly protruding, his knees locked with an almost military tension, which Margarethe claimed was a genetic attribute; "the racial physiognomy" she called it. His tight-lipped smile traversed the oval face, emphasizing the wrinkles in his cheeks and the frown lines which had deepened since the last time Sylvia had seen him.

"It's been a long time," he said, taking her arm in his. "I'm so happy to see you again."

Margarethe appeared at the top of the stairs. "Good evening," she said, holding out her hand, not bothering to tense the muscles when he shook it so that it slipped limply from his grasp. "The hat, I meant."

"Oh. Pardon me." He handed it to her, reddening slightly.

"What would you like to drink?"

"Scotch," he answered. He took Sylvia's arm and they went upstairs. "One must always drink what the natives drink, wherever one goes."

"You might want ale then," said Margarethe tonelessly.

Sylvia led Stachenberg into the small parlor and sat down on the Victorian chaise. Stachenberg sat erectly in the chair opposite, his hands on his thighs. A ligament in his neck protruded, tautening the skin.

"Well," he said, looking around, "charming room."

"How is Grete?" Sylvia asked.

"Fine, fine. But my dear, I want to know about you first, how is your dancing?"

"Going well. But why isn't Grete along this time?"

"She wanted to stay home. The children. She claims they need her more now than when they were babies. The tender years." The truth of the matter was, he hadn't asked her to accompany him this time. The University had paid for one ticket, and though twenty years ago he would have paid her way out of his own pocket, this time he didn't. And because it was her policy never to question her husband, Grete had said nothing. She had instead hurried to finish the sweater she was knitting so he could give it to Sylvia.

"For our third daughter," she said, handing him the package just before he boarded the plane. "Tell her to write to her German mother." But he couldn't give it to her anyway; he had placed it on the overhead rack and forgotten it on the plane.

"Rosalie has started dancing, did you know that?"

"How wonderful." Rosalie was Sylvia's favorite of his children.

"But Rosalie will never be as good as you. She simply doesn't have the natural grace."

"How do you know? You've never seen me dance."

"I can imagine it. I've seen it in my mind's eye." He had in fact imagined it often since she had left them. The image had come to him one afternoon while he was writing. Grete sat at the typewriter, her pigeon-like face bordered by clipped bangs bent over a paper Stachenberg had just completed and suddenly Sylvia, who had departed months before, floated in front of him, dancing to some unrecognizable music, a very abstract dance with a rhythm all its own. The vision did not strike him as extraordinary at the time. She was a charming girl, why not remember her? Even now he came across objects which reminded him of her stay in their house: a ribbon from one of Rosalie's ballet slippers left behind the potted palm in the living room, a letter from England on the mantelpiece.

"She could be our own daughter," Grete had remarked once as they walked through the Gr newald on a misty day in November. Sylvia had spotted a deer and raced into the forest after it. Rosalie, who was only eight at the time bounded clumsily after her. Stachenberg, watching them, had agreed, although if Sylvia was anyone's daughter she was more Grete's than his. Grete had spent more time with her, showing her the city and poring over

the German novels she read to improve her language. Sylvia would have liked Stachenberg to be more of a father but at the time he had had neither the leisure nor inclination.

Margarethe entered with the drinks. Stachenberg raised his glass and caught Sylvia's eye.

"*An Kinder, Küche und Kirche.*" He tried to catch Margarethe's as well, out of politeness, but she looked down and separated strands of carpet with her bare toes.

"Sylvia tells me your field is terrorism," she said suddenly.

"It is indeed."

"Do you think Germans are more terrifying than other Europeans?"

"Pardon?"

"I said, do you think Germans have a greater capacity to be terrifying?"

Stachenberg put down his drink and clasped his hands.

"I think that German youth of today have a greater tendency towards militancy."

"Not your generation?"

"No," he said, taken aback, "not mine. We lived through the war. We spent our lives rebuilding ruins."

"Oh, so it alternates generations, in other words. Your parents were Nazis, your children are terrorists and you can be relieved that you are F₂ and not F₁ or F₃."

"My dear young lady," said Stachenberg, "the youth of today—"

"Ah, youth," said Margarethe, picking up her crocheting, "ah, youth," she repeated, holding it against the velvet cushion to see whether the rosettes were even, "Whenever anybody doesn't know what to say, they always say 'ah, youth.'"

"Margarethe," said Sylvia.

"As for ruins," continued Margarethe, "I don't believe in rebuilding ruins. Out of the ashes of the old world springs the new."

"Excuse me. I believe the saying goes something like 'On the shoulders of the old generation—'"

"Excuse me," Margarethe put down her crocheting, "but I must get my things. I am going out." She went into the bedroom.

"Strange girl," Stachenberg remarked. "How long have you been living with her?"

"About six months."

"Six months? And when do you intend to settle down?"

"Settle down?" She tossed a loose strand of hair over her shoulder. "I am settled."

He looked at her pensively. "You know, you look exactly like her when you do that."

"Do what?"

"With your hair." He imitated the gesture with his hand.

Margarethe came in wearing a coat.

"I'm going to a meeting. Freddy and I are writing an article. I'll be back in a few hours."

"Then you're not coming to dinner with us?" asked Stachenberg.

"No. Pity to miss out."

"Yes. Pity."

Margarethe paused at the door, her hand on the knob.

"A question for you, Herr Professor."

"Yes?"

"Did you fight in Hitler's army?"

"I was drafted at the age of sixteen."

"Did you fight?"

"I was on the front for a day. I was captured by British soldiers that evening."

"Really."

"Quite really. Then I escaped and was caught by the Americans. The Americans, I might add, despite reputations, were not half as rude as your countrymen."

"My countrymen, Herr Professor, may lose their decorum in wartime, which does seem to be what war is all about, doesn't it? They do not, however, make sport of genocide." There was half a glass of scotch on the side table by the door where she had left it. She raised it to him. "But that's all in the past. To delicacy and decorum."

Stachenberg hailed a cab for them at the corner.

"I don't think she is good for you."

"You don't know her. I like her. I will admit that she does have a lot of opinions."

"I think she is trying to put notions in your head. I think she will limit you."

"She can't help her ideas about Germans, if that's what you mean. She went to a German school where they hit her on the mouth."

"Probably for insubordination." Sylvia was silent. Stachenberg's dicta were hard to refute. And it pleased her in a way that someone such as he with all his prestige could care about her well-being.

They arrived at the restaurant and walked into an art-deco foyer with mirrors on all sides. Sylvia pointed to one of her reflected selves, so that they all pointed, each at another, ad infinitum.

"All the me's," she said and laughed at the thought of so many of her at once.

"All the you's," Stachenberg echoed, touching her lightly on the shoulder.

The maître d'hôtel led them to a table.

"Who supports you now that you're on your own?"

"I work in a pub on week-ends."

"That's beneath you." The image of her carrying tankards of ale, of scruffy, unshaven men leering at her, bothered him.

"I think the life you've been leading is unhealthy."

"I'm perfectly healthy."

"Yes. But you shouldn't have to work."

"I like it."

"But do you ever have any time to have fun, to go out?"

"Margarethe and I don't socialize very much. We both prefer to be alone. Besides, Margarethe never likes any of the people I bring over. She says I have bad taste in people. She's usually right."

"Who is she to judge? Does her opinion mean that much to you?"

"Not always. I don't care what she thinks about you."

"What does she think about me?"

"I don't know. Why do you care?"

"I care." He took her hand. "I care more than you could possibly imagine. I don't want her to turn you against me." Sylvia had in an indirect but nonetheless penetrating way, become a part of his life, just as ambition does, or the view from a particular window. She offered him a perspective that no one else ever had. It was all the more valuable in that it wasn't his: he, for all his analytical knowledge, for all his scholarship, his devoted wife and children in Berlin, his lectures on the History of 20th Century Terrorism was stuck, held solidly terrestrial like a tree, with all his responsibilities spreading outwards like roots in every direction.

Stachenberg turned and looked at Sylvia silhouetted against the cab window. They were driving back towards the South End. Sylvia sensed rather than saw Stachenberg contemplating her. His eyes moved from her hands to her waist, lingered for a moment on her breasts and came to rest finally on her face.

"He's drunk," she thought, "he doesn't really mean to look at me like this." He had ordered a whole liter of wine at dinner and had finished off most of it himself. He moved closer to her.

"Why don't you let me assist you?"

In spite of herself, she leaned slightly away.

"Assist me? I don't need assistance."

"Margarethe gives you money, doesn't she?"

"I said I earn my own money."

"But she gives you extra if you . . . when you—well, no matter. If you stopped working, you'd have more time to dance, would you not? Or at least more time to go out. You don't do that any more, do you?"

"Not often. I haven't the time. I don't want the time."

"Move out from where you live now. I'll support you. I'll support you as if you were my daughter."

"What would you get in return?"

"Why, nothing. The satisfaction of knowing that you were safe, that you were doing as you liked and had enough time to enjoy yourself as well as to dance. What more does one get from one's children? I'd come visit, of course. I'd come to your concerts." He took her hand, and she knew even as he said it that he did not see her as a daughter at all. She found herself in the company of a man whom she neither knew nor wanted to know. She drew her hand away, repelled.

"What do you owe Margarethe? Do you owe her money? I can pay her, that's no problem."

"It's not that. Things are probably the best the way they are now."

"She uses you."

"For what? I don't have anything."

"But you do."

"What?"

"I don't know." There was a kind of desperation in his voice. A band of sweat had formed above his lip, glistening and vanishing rhythmically in the light of the passing street lamps. She turned away and stared fixedly out the window at the sea wall.

"You'd probably better not come in. I'm not sure if

Margarethe is home yet." They stood in front of the door.

"Don't worry." His smile was strained and the tendon in his neck protruded. "She is no worse than most of my students. She doesn't disturb me in the least. It's early. I wouldn't mind if you offered me a brandy." He spoke the last sentence as if to an old school chum. "Who knows when we will see one another again?" Sylvia was silent. "You won't offer your own father a brandy?" The 'r' caught in his throat so that he had to repeat 'brandy' twice. "Why do you let that girl rule you? It's she who is turning you away from me, isn't it? Sylvia, please." He touched her cheek with a damp hand and she gasped. It felt for a moment like the unexpected brush of seaweed as one swims along; the sensation that eels, not vegetation, undulate darkly at the side. She was unable to tell him to leave, but she had taken her keys in her fist so that all the jagged points jutted out next to each knuckle. He put his arm around her shoulders in a manner that would have betokened comradery had she been a young boy and reached for the latch. It moved under his hand, pressed down from the inside. The door opened and Margarethe stood in front of them. Stachenberg's arm fell from Sylvia's shoulder.

"I thought I heard voices." Margarethe looked from Sylvia to Stachenberg. "Why didn't you come in? Did you have a nice evening?"

Sylvia walked past her to the chaise and sat down, one leg bent under her body, letting the other dangle in front of the couch. Margarethe sat down beside her and picked up her crocheting. Stachenberg stood in the foyer, holding his hat by the brim, revolving it round and round slowly in his hands. No one spoke. For a few moments the only sound was the muffled jab of the crochet hook against the wool.

"Well, if no one will tell about their evening, then I'll tell about mine. Freddy and I wrote an article. It discusses the merits of hijacking as a revolutionary force. Do you ever worry about whether the plane you're on will be hijacked, Herr Professor?" She looked up from her work and stared at him unblinkingly for a few moments.

"I never would," Sylvia's voice hung for a moment, crystalized in mid-air. She looked squarely at Stachenberg. "Would you?"

"Can I offer you a brandy, Herr Professor?" asked Margarethe.

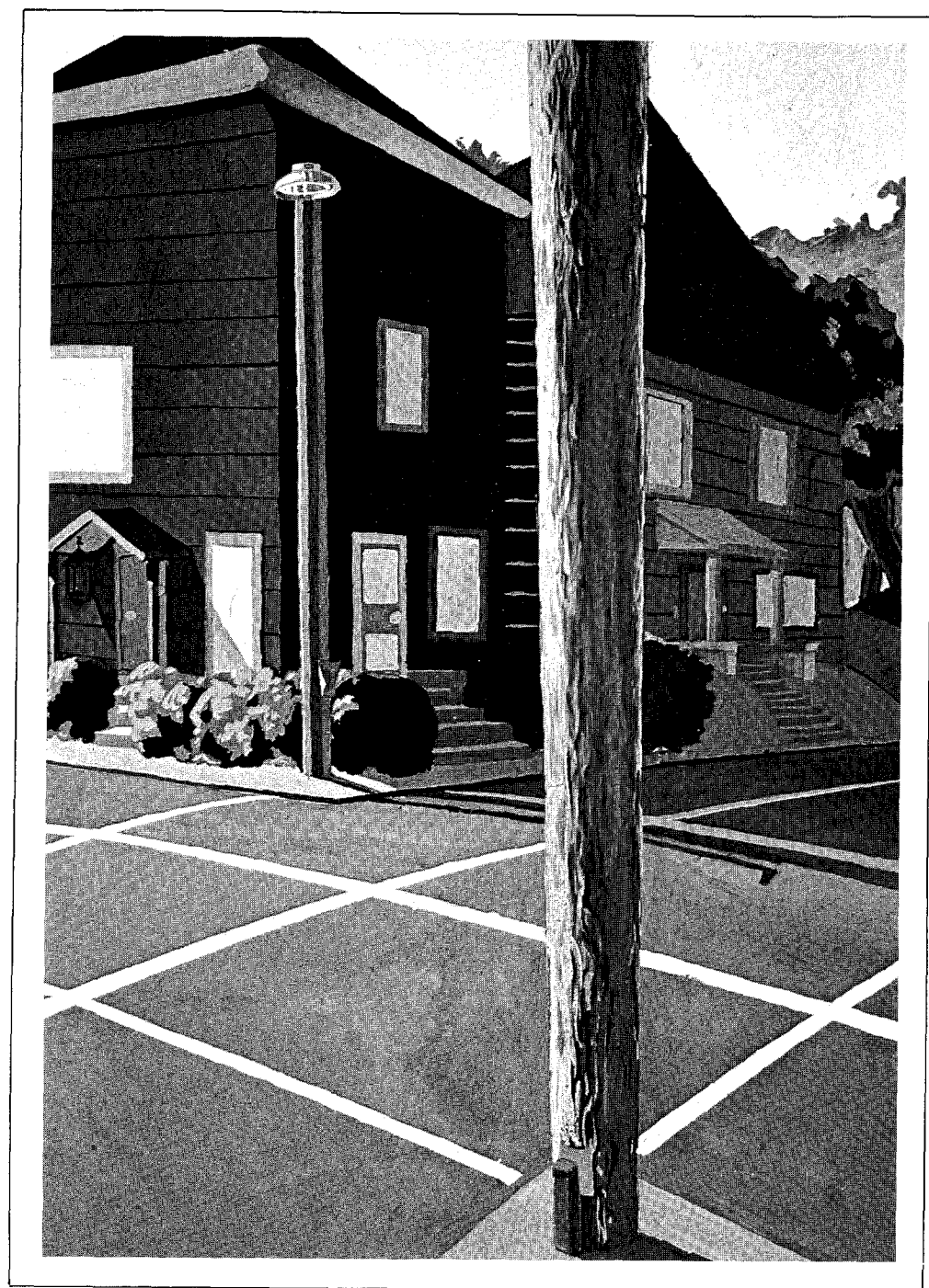
"No, thank you," said Stachenberg, "I'd best be off. I lecture tomorrow morning." The tendon in his neck stood out sharply, and the frown lines were like deep furrows.

As he let himself out, Margarethe's voice floated after him.

"Of course, if we were ever to arrange a hijacking, we would see to it that the passengers were treated with the utmost civility and decorum, Herr Professor. The utmost. We would even give them cigarettes to tide them over."

Stachenberg opened the outer door and drew his coat about himself. It seemed that the drops that fell were not rain at all but bits of mortar from the world which crumbled around him. □

ERICA LEIDERMAN is a Stanford graduate, presently working on a novel about Africa.



Jim Christy

Too Old to Quit

I was driving north on the Keno Road headed for Dawson City and I slowed the Buick when I saw the lodge at Stewart's Crossing. I pulled into the lot and could feel the rocks popping against the undercarriage and taking nicks out of the finish on the rocker panels. There was a semi at the pumps and a big Indian was getting his own fuel. Half a dozen cars were nosed up to the windows of the lodge and I found a place amongst them. As I got out and stretched I noticed him at the far side of the lot, a skinny old man in an oversized suit jacket and baggy pants. He was leaning against a tree and seemed to be talking to himself; at his feet was a bundle that looked like a shopping bag tied with rope. As a car approached he stepped away from the shade of his tree and stuck his thumb in the air. The car full of tourists wooshed by, leaving him coughing in its dusty wake. I figured he was from the west or the southern states the way he raised his arm and stuck his thumb in the air. I went into the lodge to get some breakfast. I hoped he'd get a ride.

I had some bacon and eggs and an extra coffee while I read the two-day-old Vancouver paper I'd picked up earlier that morning in Whitehorse. There was a wire tapping scandal going on in the Canadian government. The President of the U.S. was being jeered in Brazil. Vida Blue was demanding his contract be renegotiated. There was still no lead in the recovery of Charlie Chaplin's body and they thought they had the Hillsdale strangler.

I looked up from the papers and out the window. He was still there leaning against his tree. The middle-aged waitress came over to the table carrying the glass coffee pot. "Warm up?"

"Sure thing. I'll take about a half cup while I wait for you to get me a hamburger to go. Everything on it and a coffee, double cream, double sugar."

The old man would pace about the tree kicking stones and once he raised both of his arms straight out from the sides and touched hands above his head. He took off his greasy old hat and patted his gray hair, what there was of it. A big ore truck came into view but he didn't even try to thumb it down, knowing that if he got close enough to call attention to himself he was liable to be hit upside the head by stones tossed by the big wheels.

The waitress came back with the hamburger, the coffee and my check. I paid at the register and went out to the car. I backed out of the space and eased over the ruts in the lot toward the old man. When I got up close he jerked his thumb a couple of times and moved closer. I stopped the car, leaned over and opened the door. "You wouldn't mind givin an old fella a lift, would you, son?"

"Hop in."

He bowed his head up and down and grabbed his bundle and got in the car. I pulled out onto the road and he said, "I sure do preciate it, don't think I don't. Yessir, uh huh. Bin standin out there half a day wonderin where all the good people was gone to. You a nice fella and you got you a nice auto."

He patted the scarred dashboard of my nice auto, my 12-year-old Buick and, as for me, I could be an escaped psycho for all he knew. He was still bowing his head obsequiously when I said, "Okay, okay. I'm hip."

He turned his narrow, hawk-like face toward me, grinned and nodded. A few teeth were missing, the rest were yellow. "Well, damn. I ain't bin ridin with nothin but scissorbills since Sedro Wooley. In the back of an old boy's pickup truck, with some of them hippies smokin maryjane and once down in British Columbia fellow drives up to go into a restaurant like you done and he comes over, tells me he'll give me a lift when he's done eatin if'n I'd clean the dust off his auto in the meantime. He flipped me a couple towels and I cleaned real good for him and he comes out, says thanks, gets in and drives off laughin."

"You hungry?"

"I'm always hungry, son."

"Here." I gestured toward the hamburger and the coffee.

"Naw, I don't want to eat what's yours."

"It's for you."

There wasn't much to the old man, maybe a hundred and twenty pounds of him, and he had an Adam's apple like a grapefruit in a Christmas stocking. It bobbed up and down a few times in anticipation of the food. He got the hamburger out of its paper and brought it up to his mouth in slender, wrinkled fingers, the thumbs and first two fingers of each hand nicotine-stained. The old boy tore into that hamburger. The skin on his face was so thin that you could see the mesh of blue and red veins as his cheeks bulged with food. In the middle of the first mouthful he sputtered, "Sure preciate it."

He uncapped the coffee, blew on it and drank. "Ahh, sweet and creamy. How'd you know I like it like that, son?"

"You traveling light you got to drink it with all the nourishment you can get."

"I reckon you done some road time yourself."

"A little."

"Well, I bin doin it most my life. Up and down this continent, this way and that. 74 years old and too old to quit."

JIM CHRISTY is a Virginian who maintains "bases" in New Jersey, Florida, and the Yukon Territory. His book Rough Road to the North is published by Doubleday.

"Where you headed now?"

"Fairbanks. Gone to Alaska. Only place left I haven't been."

"I got some bad news for you, pop. You're on the wrong road."

He finished a mouthful and gulped. "What's at you're tellin me?"

"Somebody brought you off the Alcan. This is the Keno Road, goes to Dawson City. Oh, it'll get you to Alaska but you got to take a ferry across the Yukon and follow what they call the Top of the World Highway to Tetlin Junction back on the Alcan. I figure you're going 350 miles to make 150."

"Story of my life."

He wasn't angry. He shook his head and took another bite. "That last bastard—he was havin his fun with me."

"Looks like. It would probably still be quicker if you went back to the Alcan. I can take you back to the lodge."

"Naw, I'll keep on. That's why I'm gone to Alaska, get away from all the mean folks and the fools. Way the world's goin now it's just turnin out more fools everyday and there's no stop to it. Nobody has no respect for anybody especially old people and least of all old people travelin the roads. Then again how can anybody have respect for old people cause most of them don't know nothin. Course, they don't know nothin cause they've never done nothin to learn nothin. If you get my meaning. Used to be a man would come of age and go out to see a bit of the world, do a job of work or whatever and maybe settle up somewheres and gather his experience. What you call your horse sense. He'd have kids and they'd have kids and all this time he's been livin his life and learnin bout it. Good times and bad. Man might not have education but he knew things. Wisdom's the old word for it. He'd pass it on. Now days there ain't nothin to pass on and nobody to listen to you if you had somethin. I bin down to Florida seen all those old folks waitin to die. Bin over to St. Pete, they call the town Wrinkle City, got this square in the center of town with benches and old folks, hundreds of them, sittin there and if you watch long enough you start to see them fall over, one here, one there. Just waitin to die. Call em senior citizens. Anybody call me that I'll tell em what for. I'm an old man. Makin it sound sweeter ain't gonna put no lead in my pencil."

He sipped the coffee and stared out the window as if lost in thought. His upper lip quivered slightly. "I had lead in my pencil that's for sure and in my day you could tell a man from a woman. Not like it is now where I can hardly figure out the one from the other and the funny thing is they can't either. Hell, I was 14 years old before I ever got my finger wet enough to turn a page. After that I started gettin it regular cause I started my travelin about. Left my mother's good home in Birmingham. Man don't learn nothin hangin round the house. This was during the war, the first war. Lots of young girls on the road. Course they was lots of men liked to take a boy and make a punk of em. Me, I wanted to call my ass my own. Took a crowbar once to some old hunkie when I was bummin in P.A. Yessir."

We were climbing out of the valley now, the road hugged the side of the mountain and you could look across

the basin at the poplar trees at the bottom of the other mountain. They were bright green and shimmering as the wind ruffled their leaves. They gave way to the dark evergreens and two thirds of the way up the gray stone of the mountain seemed to burst right through the trees. The peak looked like it was spilling lava.

The old man said, "My, my but it's a pretty sight. If I was younger I might settle here but I got to be near people, I suppose, even if most people disappoint me. Don't have no money so I couldn't even build me a cabin. Too old to work in the mines. I figure Alaska's the last place for the likes of me. Some place like Fairbanks or Anchorage. See, boy, I'm an old style bindle stiff and my time's about run out. A way of life that went on a long time is just about gone too and I just about outlasted it. I feel at home in honky tonks and clean skid row hotels. Now skid row took a bad meaning someways. Used to be they built a log road to get the lumber out of the forests. Built the road itself of logs and they greased em and skidded the lumber out. Built honky tonks and hotels along the road. See what I mean?"

"Yeah, that makes sense."

"Sure does. Me, I seen the whole world turn about in those honky tonks and dives and joints, call em what you will. Used to be I was a strappin lad comin in there to drink a few and tell some lies and find me a cutie. I was a good lookin kid so they used to tell me. Had sort of a polish even though I was a knockabout and a roustabout just like the rest. Yeah, I worked in the lumber camps in Washington state, was a camp cook down in B.C. where I was just a couple days ago, other jobs like that where you wouldn't see a woman for months sometime so I'd come on in, get rid of my money. Been in those low life places all over North America and down in Old Mexico. Went to a place in Juarez one time, all the girls was nekkid. One little thing couldna been more'n fifteen, had them brown titties and black nipples just sticking on up and out in the air. She come walkin up to me and I says, "Don't point them at me señorita they might go off."

He laughed, a muffled sound in his throat that made his Adam's apple jump. Laughed so hard it turned into a cough and it took him a few minutes to calm himself. His face flushed a deep pink.

"See what I mean, son? Now I can't even think about it. Yeah, I just go in those places these days and watch. Hope somebody notices me and says, 'Stand the old timer a drink' like I used to do. Always had an ear for what an ol fella had to say."

The countryside had leveled off now. On either side of the road was an apron of tall grass and wild flowers before the woods began. We crossed a number of small streams and came up on a big lake. "That lake over there is called Gravel Lake. Supposed to be the best moose hunting in the world."

He looked out his window and his head trembled ever so slightly. "Wish I was just a little bit younger. Would get me a moose come November and live out in the bush. It'd last me all winter. All's I'd need is a 303"—he pronounced it three-ought-three—"and someone to hold it steady for me and help me drag the old girl out."

"But, hell, why think about it, my mind's just wan-

derin out loud. I'd be bored soon enough. Is why I'm gone to Alaska. They say it's the last frontier. I want to be among my kind. Wanna be somewheres where it don't all look the same. Used to be you could tell what town you was in. No more. Wanna get away from the chain stores and the supermarkets. Wanna walk down the street without the little kids throwin stuff at me and cussin. Used to be little kids'd follow a hobo and think he was a hero or somethin come from a faraway place with stories of where he'd been. Not no more. Kids get all their stories from the television and a hobo's somebody too dumb to fit in anywheres. Soon everybody's gonna look like they belong on television.

"Aw, shit, I'm sorry to be talkin this way. Talkin at you. You didn't pick me up so's to hear my complainin."

"That's all right."

After a few minutes he said, "Uh, excuse me, son, but would you mind? I have to relieve myself terrible bad. Would you mind stoppin for a second?"

I pulled off the road and he struggled out of the car. He looked back over his shoulder and trudged through the flowers and into the bush. He was probably nervous about the operation, about anyone seeing the ritual he had to go through. I walked across the road and pissed amongst the wild roses and kicked at a brown beer bottle on my way out. I got back behind the wheel and had to wait a couple more minutes for him. When he got back in he grinned sheepishly. "Kidneys ain't what they used to be. Can't hardly ride in an auto more'n a couple hours. Freight train'd be the death of me now. It ain't no fun gettin old, son."

We were on the last stretch to Dawson now. The old man started to doze. He fought it at first, his head would fall forward and he would come to with a start, mumble something and doze off again. Finally he just slept. About fifty miles from Dawson the road improved some (they brought the graders this far once a month), so I switched on the radio. It was music but it was bad music. The announcer came on and talked about the producer of the record and how he had produced "so many other giant hits."

I turned it off. The old man woke when we had passed the Dempster Highway Lodge and blinked and yawned. He muttered and hawked and spat out the window. "What the hell's that?"

He pointed at the heaps of rock lining the road.

"Tailing piles. They dredged all that up mining the creeks."

"Mebbe once I get settled in Fairbanks I'll wander round in them hills and make my livin pannin the creeks. Can you do that round here?"

"You work at it you might make a few dollars a day."

"Don't mind workin hard. Yeah, mebbe that's what I'll do. Get just enough money to get drunk on."

Stuck on top of one of the tailing piles is a sign for a unisex hair salon in Dawson but the old man didn't see it.

"We gettin there?"

"Yeah, almost there."

He began to check his gear. He untied the twine from around his bundle and poked about in the bag."

"What you got in there?"

"Old blanket that's too ventilated, some mosquito netting, pair of socks, pair of drawers. S'bout it. Cept stuff I carry in my pockets."

He reached in the side pocket of his suit jacket and came up with a handful of twine and a penknife. He took an old pint bottle from his inside breast pocket and offered it to me. "It's just bout dead but you can wet your lips."

I took a drink of the rye and handed it back to him. He finished it and wiped his lips with the back of his hand. He fished in his baggy pants pocket and pulled out a knotted blue railroad handkerchief. He worried the knot for a couple of moments, got it open and counted his money, some coin and a few wrinkled bills. "Leven dollars and change. It'll get me there easy."

The woods ended and there was Dawson City wedged in between the mountain and the river. Except for the cars and pick-up trucks it looked like it must have back in the gold rush days. False front buildings and board sidewalks. They hadn't managed to ruin the place yet although they were trying to. I turned down First Avenue towards the center of town, such as it is. Some Indians were hanging around out front of the Westminster and a white woman, a tourist, stood in the middle of the street taking their picture with an Instamatic. A line of campers was parked alongside the Eldorado. The old man took it all in.

I stopped in front of the liquor store and went in. When I came back I saw an Indian standing in front of the car handing a bottle in a bag to the old man. The old man took a swallow and gave it back and the Indian patted him on the shoulder.

"Nice folks some of them people," said the old man when I was in the car.

I drove along the river, past the bank where Robert Service used to work and down to the ferry. It was just reaching shore. We got out of the car and I walked with him to the ramp. "When you get on" I told him, "ask some of them if they'd give you a ride. There's 150 miles of road on the other side and nothing on it except Customs and Action Jackson's cafe halfway along. He'll let you sleep in his kitchen if you get stuck."

The old man nodded his head, "Yep, yep. Why thank you, son."

I felt foolish for giving him advice. He'd been traveling so long there was nothing I could tell him.

"Oh, yeah. I almost forgot."

I gave him the bottle and he thanked me profusely. He set his bundle on the ground and broke the seal. He handed it to me after he'd drunk and said, "S'bin mighty nice ridin with you, son. I preciate it, hear?"

I returned the bottle to him and he put it in his inside jacket pocket where the other had been.

"You ever round Fairbanks way you look me up."

"Will do, oldtimer."

He tipped the brim of his greasy hat, picked up his bundle and made his way up the ramp of the little ferry boat. When he was aboard they tooted the horn and pulled away. When the ferry reached midstream they hit the current and let it take them to the other shore. It was there by the time I got back to the car and I watched and saw him start trudging up the road. Nobody wanted to give an old man a ride. □

Some Considerations Touching the

DIALOGUE AMONG THE MODERNS

"Please meet my twin children," said Strong Verb, "I call them Who, and Whom."

"Just why," said Expletive, "did you call them *that*?"

"To distinguish between them. Who was born first, and then Whom."

"It makes no difference that Who was born first, does it?" said Present Participle, "there's no difference between them. Does anyone care anyway?"

"Only the linguists," said Verb To-Be. "And they quarrel among themselves."

"Aren't you a little hard on them?" said Stock Response.

"Well, listen: I have known a publishing linguist who, when he doesn't know which way to jump, reconstructs the sentence to avoid the problem."

"You're too impatient," said Accusative Case. "Give them time to figure it out. They're inventing a new language. And when accomplished, they can revise the *Harbrace Handbook*. Someone should. I'm that modern."

"You, not the *Handbook*, are out-of-date," said Present Tense. "It's been revised many times with a good deal of common sense, especially for students. But they don't revise it every time the linguists have a convention."

"Back there a bit Verb To-Be used *among* instead of *between*," said

Plural Number. "Where did he learn that?"

"From my eighth-grade teacher," said Verb To-Be. "She said the difference is handy to know, but then she went on to something important."

"What was so important?" said Pronoun, always looking for Proper Noun.

"Poetry," said Infinitive. "But I'm weary of my battered life—to split or not to split! You'd think I'm a wooden fence rail. But good poetry always restores my sanity."

"Are the poets aware of the new linguistics?" said Weak Verb.

"Oh, no!" said Poetic License. "The poets know what language is *for*."

"What makes the poets so sure of their importance?" shot back Literal Truth.

"Well,"—cut in Symbol and pushing aside Article who speaks too often and says too little—"I make a poem alive and relevant whether read yesterday, today, or tomorrow, and that makes a classic."

"But you learn that in imaginative literature, don't you?" said Metaphor, with quick nods from Hyperbole and Parable.

Symbol patted his two-edged insight, picked up his Eternal Lantern, smiled, strolled into yesterday, and found Shakespeare who had given Symbol everlasting life.

—H.W. Reninger

THE GREAT LANGUAGE DEBATE

English for Everybody, by Ellsworth Barnard. Dinosaur Press (Box 327, Amherst, MA 01002). \$5

People take language very seriously. Like sex and politics, the great language debate stirs primal emotions.

At first reading, *English for Everybody* appears to be the work of a brash young teacher who has taken on not only the entire older generation of

English and so-called language-arts teachers but *The New York Times* and *New Yorker* as well. Actually the author is a Professor Emeritus of the University of Massachusetts, a man with a long and distinguished career as a teacher and author. The fact that he has goaded major publications to intemperate attacks and emotional charges suggests that the thesis he presents is no mere academic quarrel.

The kernel of his argument is this: "... standards of usage vary

from time to time and place to place, and from one social level to another. . . ." Phrased more bluntly: "Language that everybody—or almost everybody—uses must be grammatically correct, since. . . grammar is only a systematic description of the way language is used."

On this basis he defends the psychological need for *ain't*, the utility of *finalize*, the value of *contact* meaning "to make contact with," the clarity (if not the logic) of *to center around*. He

Use & Abuse of English

regrets the passing of the past perfect ("had. . .") on sentimental grounds but no others. "Why not?" he asks. "Anglo-Saxon got along with only two tenses, past and present, and so can Modern English."

The elaborate rules governing *shall* and *will*, *I* and *me*, *who* and *whom* with all their exceptions and violations strike him as absurd. Neither politicians nor scholars follow the alleged rules perfectly and their meaning is rarely confused by such violations.

On the basis of this argument he has been attacked by *The New York Times* as offering "an apologia for the slovenly blend of gangster argot and Hollywood patois that passes for English in America" and promoting a "dictatorship of the illiterate" and lecturing ". . . on how to be slob." Strong language, that.

He has been censured in *The New Yorker's* "Talk of the Town" and by Clifton Fadiman in *Holiday*—to say nothing of less prestigious critics who have taken the time to write bitter but grammatically "correct" letters of protest. The level of hostility was reflected in a *Times* headline, "Prof Says Bum English Ain't So Bad After All."

Why such rage? Barnard is charitable with at least the more thoughtful of his opponents.

Their concern for society is genuine, and their arguments are not frivolous. They see the departure from tradition in the use of language as in part a symptom and in part a cause of what they view as cultural decay.

One problem is that his detractors tend to charge like maddened bulls before they read the whole argument. In this volume, for example, fully half the book is devoted to style. He clearly does believe in standards; he merely insists that those standards change with the occasion and the audience. In a sense, he is asking for greater rather than less deliberation in writing. Before we begin the first sentence we are to ask, "In this unique situation, what is the best way of saying what I have to say?"

To his mind, "the best way" always demands clarity. That's what

writing is all about. Thus he can attack the jargon of governmental agencies, sociologists, and many lawyers even when their modifiers don't dangle and their infinitives are not split. "The best way" also requires naturalness and forcefulness. And when the occasion is appropriate, beauty.

Barnard is no linguistic anarchist. He merely feels—and feels strongly—that proscriptive rules do not generate writing which is clear, natural, forceful, or beautiful. In fact, they often detract from all four goals by stressing arbitrary concerns.

His position is not altogether new, but it has rarely been pushed as far. That's what makes this little volume exciting. The militant "absolutist" may not even get to the section on style and so will continue to think badly of Dr. Barnard. But the rest of us, those enlightened souls he describes as "pragmatists," are the ones for whom this work is really intended. We are not united in our liberality. Some, like myself, are going to question whether one can teach such relativism effectively. Pragmatism can, after all, be used to suggest that certain rules learned early establish patterns which develop clarity. Perhaps college could be the time to shed such rigidity as a snake leaves its old skin behind, rather than the time at which the student learns for the first time the vocabulary with which he or she can discuss usage and grammar.

Serious readers may also wonder whether too rapid change in usage leads to confusion. If this is so, could we argue that more traditional methods of teaching English provide a stabilizing effect—not rigidity but a more orderly evolution?

While written as a lively and frequently witty attack on traditionalists, this work will generate the most interest among those of us who think of ourselves as flexible and open in our attitudes toward language. If we are the liberals, Ellsworth Barnard is the radical who insists that we take another look at our assumptions about language.

—Stephen Minor

AN OP ED ENCOUNTER

Joseph Martin Queenan

Dear *New York Times*:

On the way to school the other day, me and my main man Kool Ray were detained by the po-lice and wacked upside the head. For no reason, either, whereas even if there had been a reason; like hey, do you think that would have been cool? So I just thought I'd like to take this opportunity to ask the po-lice to lighten up.

Sincerely Yours,
Kool Earl

Dear *New York Times*:

In a letter of May 3, a young man identifying himself as "Kool Earl" committed (among others) the following stylistic errors:

- 1.) "Upside the head" is ungrammatical;
- 2.) The word "whereas" is misused;
- 3.) "Police" is not normally a hyphenated word;
- 4.) "Lighten up" is not an acceptable term in a formal communication;
- 5.) Even were "upside the head" acceptable, it should read "upside *our* heads," as more than one head was whacked. Also, "whacked" is not spelled "wacked."

The letter, suitably modified, ought to read:

On May 1 of this year, while en route to the school we attend, my friend and I were set upon by the police in a totally unprovoked assault. I simply take this opportunity to implore the N.Y. Police Department to use more restraint in the future.

As a retired high school teacher, I deplore such abuses of the English language, and would even go so far as to suggest that neither of the young men would have been assaulted by the police had they mastered the minimal language skills needed to allay

(Turn to Page 44)

the suspicions of our peace officers in potentially explosive situations.

Very Truly Yours,
Bartholomew Welk

Dear *New York Times*:

I object vociferously to Mr. Welk's downgrading of Mr. Kool Earl's writing skills. While certain of the terms he uses may be grammatically incorrect—in the strict technical sense—the same could probably be said of Faulkner, and it can certainly not be denied that the letter is marked by a fierce cogency and imbued with an almost visceral poetical truth. However, I would hasten to point out that even in the patois of the streets, the word "whacked" is spelled with an 'h'.

Sincerely Yours,
Ralph Pritchett

Dear *New York Times*:

No, it ain't either. According to my studies, soon to be published in *Orpheus in Funkland*, the word "whacked" may also be spelled "wacked," which variant is commonly used in certain areas of North Philadelphia and the South Bronx. The point about Faulkner is well taken, however.

Very Truly Yours,
Agamemnon Tyson
Ethnolinguist

Dear *New York Times*:

The point about Faulkner is *not* well taken. Joyce. . . perhaps, but not Faulkner.

Sincerely Yours,
Clifton Dillard
Friend of the Arts

Dear *New York Times*:

While on my way to school, my friend Kool and I were whacked on the sides of our heads, apparently without provocation. Even if there had been justifiable cause for this inglorious treatment, my associate and I would have objected to the indignities visited upon us. I thought I would take this opportunity to re-

quest that the police act with more forbearance in the future.

Sincerely Yours,
Kool Earl

Dear *New York Times*:

The Police Department refuses to dignify with comment allegations that any of its operatives have participated in unprovoked assaults upon any person or persons who writes, or looks, like William Faulkner.

Sincerely Yours,
The N.Y.P.D.

Dear *New York Times*:

I would like to take issue with my friend Kool Earl's version of the events which took place on May 1 of this year. *He* may have gotten whacked on the side of the head; I got whacked *upside* the head. In fact, I got whacked upside the hade.

Respectfully Yours,
Kool Ray

Dear *New York Times*:

Could we leave Faulkner out of this?

Disdainfully Yours,
Burton Purvis

Dear *New York Times*:

It seems to me that we are missing the point here. Whether or not the youngsters in question were whacked on or upside the head is not the issue.

The issue is: what kind of a society allows its police officers to whack *anyone* on or about or upside the head?

Morosely Yours,
A Concerned Civil Libertarian

Dear *New York Times*:

This one, I thought I made that clear.

Yours,
Kool Earl

Dear *New York Times*:

As one of the police officers involved in the alleged whacking upside the heads of Messrs. Kools Ray and Earl, I feel it my obligation to state that the young men were whacked upside the head in response to cruel epithets of a base and vulgar nature directed at my partner and I. I would also hasten to challenge Mr. Welk's intimation that had the Messrs. Kool achieved greater mastery of the English language we would have refrained from whacking them upside the head. The decision to use limited force in a police scenario is not predicated upon the participating officers' assessment of the offending party's language skills.

Respectfully Yours,
Jerry McGrath

Dear *New York Times*:

Sorry I brought up the subject.

Kool Earl

Who Grew Snakes

Down the road lived an old woman who grew snakes in her orchard, then paid the boys to kill them. The boys got very good at this job, catching the snakes with sticks that had forked nails on the end. They slipped these down over the snake heads and picked them up unhurt.

The old woman wanted to see them alive before she'd talk money. So the boys brought them to her in plastic sacks, and she'd look in to see the squirming garters blaming each other for their misery. She got a little puffy when she saw them, but she'd bring the money. Ten cents a-piece.

The boys took out one snake at a time so she could count them. They hit the snake heads with rocks, right

Tasting Leaves

Wednesday the first: Bashfully we gather in the parking lot of the nature preserve, seven, nine, twelve of us. Anti-social nature-lovers all, we need the presence of an even more anti-social guide to bring us together, to stop the toes of our hiking boots from digging bashfully in the dust. When she comes—her name is Miss Heinricker, I think, and she lets the black flies flit through her rugged red hair—I can tell she harbors an instant suspicion of me. She thinks I'm not serious about leaf-tasting. She thinks I just want to pick up some serious leaf-tasting clubwoman. This is a grievous suspicion to harbor of a seriously-married man, but I'm willing to let it pass if it will help bring the group together.

To show how untrue it is, though. I bought a book two summers ago on what leaves are good to taste and what leaves should not be tasted under any condition—most things with milky saps are poisonous. As a matter of fact, until Miss Heinricker gave me that look, that What-Are-You-Doing-With-These-Leaf-Club-Ladies-On-A-Wednesday-Morning-When-Their-Husbands-Are-Off-Making-A-Living look, the thought had never crossed my mind. Besides, there's another male, an old guy on crutches. Besides, the club ladies aren't that great, nor am I that great, so we make a nice ordinary everyday anti-social leaf-tasting group; let's forget the sex.

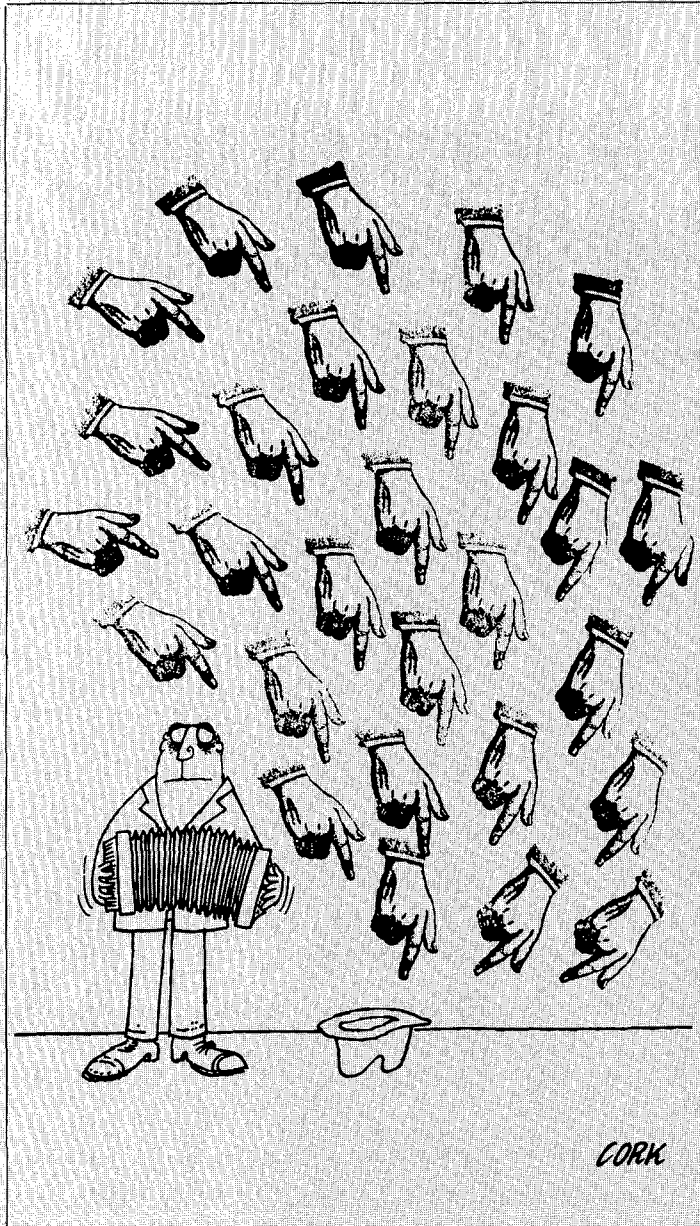
Things we will need: a hand lens between five and ten power. Jackknife. Notebook if we want. We're not out five minutes before the least attractive leaf-taster among us stands before a yellow birch tree, whose leaves smell enticingly of wintergreen, and asks me if I want to use her hand lens, which I do—but it's not detachable from the cord around her thick, glistening neck.

Wednesday the second: Trudging along, through the bug clouds, trying to wake up, trying to recall a dream where there were: tent caterpillars all over me? nesting between my fingers? when I find that I have stepped on the back of Miss Heinricker's red sneaker. We share a scowl, and that night, with my friend Buttermen over, he asks me how I can fall in love, what exactly do I know about the woman?

And on the spot I write a poem. Buttermen has never seen me write a poem before, even though he was my roommate for two years in college, and he thinks my wont to do so is one giant misadventure. Also he is extremely skeptical that Sir John Suckling or Richard Lovelace could have written their poems on electric IBMs. But there, on my electric IBM right before his eyes, to answer his questions I write what's in my 20th century heart and hand it to him:

BLACK FLIES

*my love trudges through the bug clouds
on our leaf-tasting treks,*



In Her Orchard

there on her sidewalk where she'd see it all. When they finished, the old woman paid them, and they put the bloody snakes back in the sacks.

When the boys were out of view of the old woman's house, they emptied the sacks on the ground. Most snakes still squirmed a little, but the boys could tell, after doing this many times, which ones would live past sunset. They took the live ones home and put them in the cellar. The next morning they fed these survivors vegetables and milk, then carried them out to the pasture where they wouldn't be able to find their way back to the old woman's orchard. The boys figured it would be unfair to the snakes and the old woman if they killed the same snake twice.

—Jim Heynen

*my love always encouraging questions
about plant reproduction:*

pistils

stamens

*she wears a ruggedly red sweatshirt;
mid-30ish jeans with leather*

*lightning bolts just above and below the
back of each knee that make*

*my eyes flash; sopping wet sneakers; pale
anti-social skin that I can*

*imagine imprinting; nice squint when
she's squinting against the*

black flies

*my love drives a badly-dented pick-up;
her ass is just the slightest*

*touch heavy, which thrills me, it proves
she's really self-sufficient—*

*however would I recognize my love without
the black flies in between?*

Butterman says he has to get back to his bar. B.A. degree in the Psychology of International Relations and he has to get back to his bar. Makes me a fabulous gin and tonic before he goes, though.

Wednesday the third: Our nature group is coming together splendidly. Everyone chatters to everyone else, waves away each other's flies. The old guy on crutches apparently doesn't speak English, which is O.K., but he can't be learning much. The unattractive woman who lent me her hand lens becomes less and less unattractive the more she talks about her son's adventures on his trail bike outside of Boise, Idaho. He has some pretty great adventures outside of Boise, Idaho, and as his mother's thick, glistening face takes on a look that could conceivably be called beautiful—I grow sad. I don't know why: human interaction. Even out here in nature people make people feel vulnerable. But the person I'm really feeling vulnerable about . . . is my love, of the slightly heavy ass and the badly-dented pick-up. I have had such fevered fantasies about her all week that I can not bring myself to look her in the eye. Pistils. Stamens. I walk four paces behind, my heart a big bug bite.

Butterman says I am being foolish. You can't be nice to everybody but the one person you want to be nice to. Or maybe, he says, keep being nice to everybody and then it won't seem like such a big deal when you turn your niceness very naturally onto her. By the way, he says, smiling with expertise as he grinds a little mint from my garden into our vodkas, you're telling your wife all about this, right?

Wednesday the fourth: Life goes on at a fixed rate of speed. If one is fearful that it's going too fast, that there are only three more Wednesdays left to leave whatever sort of mark one decides one wants to leave, for instance, one has just to languidly sip a little vine water, languidly munch a little bull briar, and pop another Valium. It is not necessarily true that pistils and sta-

mens will come flowering out of your mouth. It is not necessarily true that she will curse you for conjoining your black flies with hers. Focus on her less mystical aspects, such as the fact that her pen says HandiWipe. Concentrate on HandiWipe. Cling to HandiWipe. Wait till the rest of the group starts down the path with the black flies glued to their necks, and then move in on HandiWipe. Now you are moving, you are moving without thinking for the first time in weeks. You are grasping Miss Heinricker's rough-hewn elbow and looking deep into her rough-hewn eyes and saying, "Your shoelace is untied," and as she thanks you, as she bends to tie it, thanking you a second time with her breathless outdoorsy smile, you are thinking it's a lucky thing you're seriously-married or things could really get dangerous now.

However, truth to tell: things are a little bit dangerous already. For hours Wednesday night I am in a state, tossing and turning on our double bed at home with a horrible craving for ostrich fern, for buckwheat leaves, for the exotic root beer flavor of sassafras. I want to taste. I want to taste. Nature is so various! And my guide so knowledgeable! To calm myself, I tiptoe from my wife's side and sneak down the back stairs to write another IBM poem:

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MISS HEINRICKER

*the way she cups a run-over robin in her
hand and tells us not to be*

*sentimental because this too is natural,
then as we're concentrating*

*on not being sentimental the way she lobs
the bird into the bushes so*

*it's a graceful burial. this is what
i like about miss heinricker.*

*also her information that certain pine cones
are so tight that only*

*a forest fire will release the seeds; her
information that all species*

*will cut themselves back after they achieve
maximum density; the way*

*she includes war in her view of evolution—
in a word, her long view.*

*she once showed me a tree that had been
sickled in its infancy, and*

*when it had come back it had disguised
itself; it had changed the*

*shape of its leaves! all these are things
i like about miss heinricker.*

*about the only thing i don't like is her
cluster of red flea bites.*

I feel slightly better and now I go to sleep.

Wednesday the fifth: My love arrives wearing pale purple lipstick and vibrant green eye shadow to trudge through the bug clouds. She looks as fearful of me as I

once did of her. Seeing her love so nakedly exposed, I run over immediately and brush a spider off the back of her sweatshirt. I brush a ladybug off her shoulder. We talk about this and that. She's limping. I like that. She got her limp chasing a baby squirrel 40 feet up a pine tree, it jumped to a hemlock, but she caught it anyway. I like that very much. Creeping along her collar is a pale green inchworm which I don't brush; I think that would be pushing things.

Butterman asks me do clothes have anything to do with my unlikely success? He has been jealous of my unlikely successes, once I get past the panic stage, since our sophomore year together. I say no. He says what have you been wearing? I tell him Harris tweed with horn rims the first Wednesday, khakis and sneakers the second, dungarees and a work shirt the third, dungarees and I think a work shirt the fourth, and my pink Christian Dior shirt the fifth. The pink Christian Dior, he says, with the monogram on the pocket that looks like you've been on an all-night debauch? Yes, I say. "Ho ho," he says, slamming open a newspaper, "You're lucky I'm not a woman or I would *stay away*."

I look out the window at the passing hordes of moths.

Ten or fifteen seconds further into the evening Butterman slams down his paper and asks what my dreams have been like. I say nothing out of the ordinary: people spraying each other with insect repellent, et cetera; what about his? He says he has been having explicit dreams about my wife. What sort of explicit? I ask, but I can see from the expression on his well-educated bartender's face he expects pistils and stamens to flower from his mouth. We share a distinctly tension-filled, uncollegiate silence. He demands to know what the blanket is doing in the back of my jeep. I tell him I always carry a blanket there in case I have to cover something stealable. Why? I say—you really got to tell me, I really got to know. Butterman wipes his lips. Because if you were moving off with the leaf-tasting guide, he says.

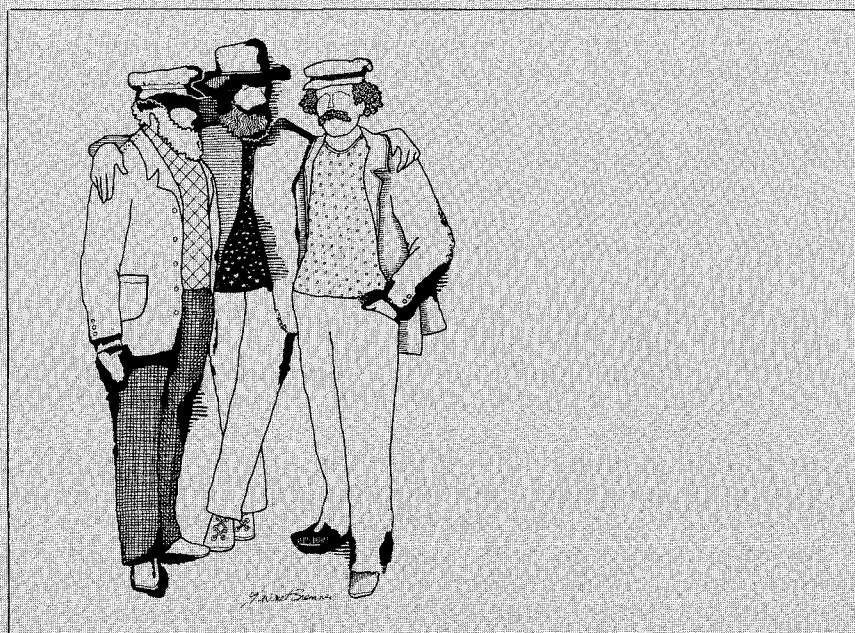
Wednesday the sixth: All week I have been in a sweat

anticipating Wednesday, the sixth, final field trip, push coming to shove. Miss Heinricker maybe getting a tick on her calf and raising her trouser leg to pluck it, maybe giving me a look when she points out the spittle certain bugs like to play in, maybe leaving under my windshield blade an IBM poem hot off her own 20th century heart. No? Yes? Who's to say what disasters may befall two people who fall in love tasting leaves? Yet I awaken before dawn with two dreams.

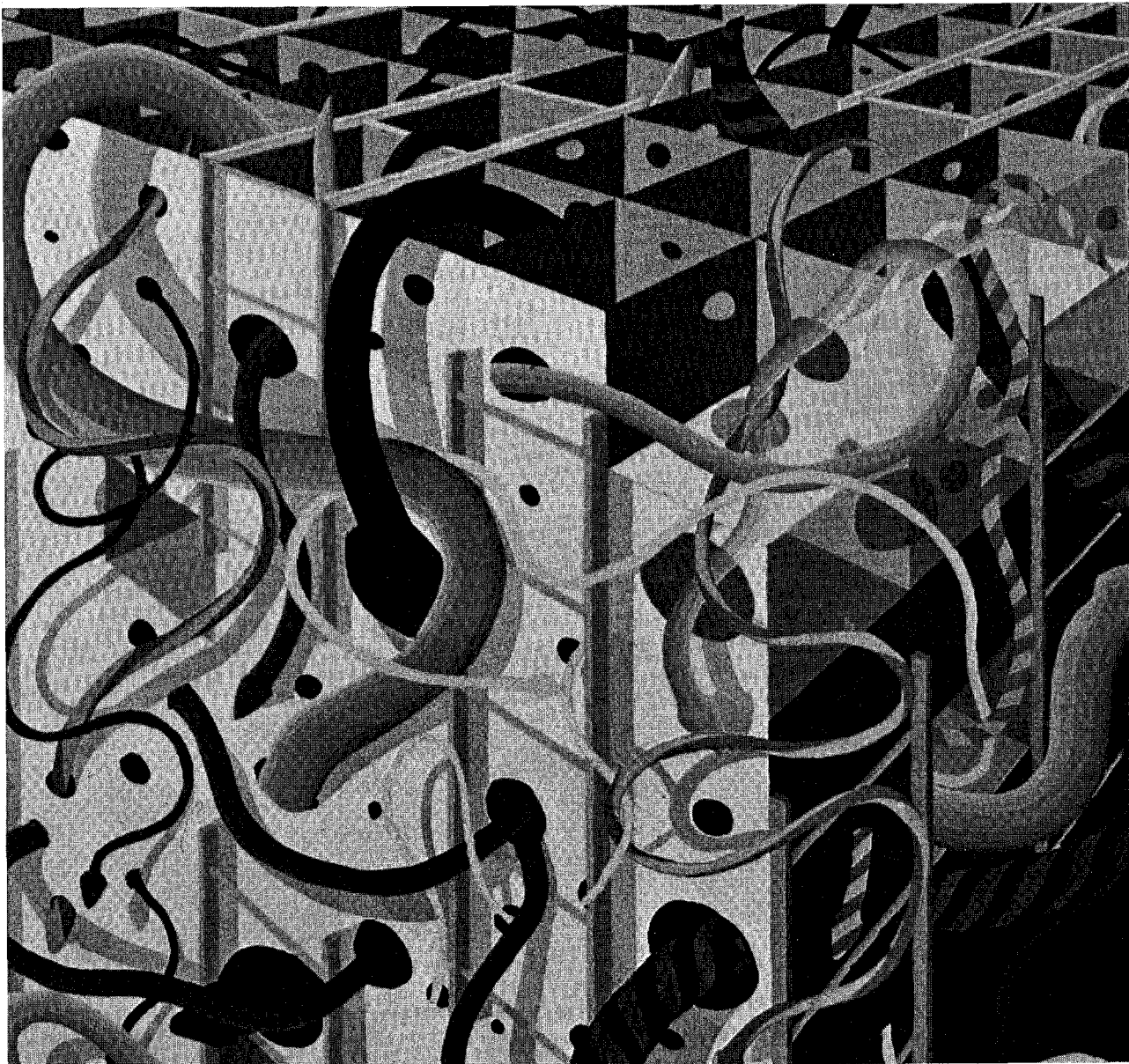
I dream I have no choice but to break up with my love the leaf-taster. It is absolutely silent, for she has become some sort of plant, she is in a red flower pot, and very chivalrously I water her, so that the water goes down smoothly and aromatically, and then with utmost delicacy I remove her from her flower pot and transplant her, set her free in a field of clover. Part of me wants to smile and sigh as I do this, but no sounds come.

Also I dream that I am breaking up with her at a florist shop. This time it is noisy as I rush into the greenhouse area where she is; however I am not here to pick her up, as she thinks, but to say goodbye. Surprise, hurt, anger—she swats at me, threatening suicide on the spot. In real life should people ever swat at me and threaten suicide I would be crippled, I could not deal with it at all, but in my dream I know exactly what to do: Immediately I take her to a doctor, who looks like Butterman, and who sadly hands her a certificate saying it is O.K. for her to kill herself. I take her to a priestess, who looks like my wife, and who with genuine sympathy hands her a similar certificate. My leaf-taster is all cleared for blast-off, but now suddenly she panics. She opens her mouth and screams at me, with words that wildly fill the air and spume everywhere like some desperate, detoxifying gas: that men are parasites, that the world is a poisoned place. The words fail to disinfect, fail to purify me of my passions. With a fullness of breath and a clarity unknown to me in my waking hours I cup her lovely rugged head in my hands and tell her no, men are not parasites, the world is not poisoned, it is not a poisoned place: this is just the way people are.

—Daniel Asa Rose



SUZI SINZINNATI



by Joe David Bellamy

JOE DAVID BELLAMY edits Fiction International in upstate New York. The selection here is from a novel, *Going Steady*.

Cincinnati, Ohio
August, 1960

A cymbal crashed in the pit of the Gayety Burlesque and the piano and saxophone let loose on one chorus of "There's No Business Like Show Business." Then a voice said: "For our first number, her very first time at the Gayety Theatre, let's have a big hand for the fabulous—Hazel Storm!" The band broke into a jerky "I'm In the Mood For Love" with a

ba-ba-ba-bump
ba-ba-ba-bump
ba-ba-ba-bump

just as a gloved arm knifed out of the curtains and began slowly caressing the velvet. Suddenly the curtain was struck an indignant blow, flipped rudely aside, and out danced a skinny black-gowned woman old enough to be the boy's mother. She whirled around nervously, sizing up the general disappointment of the crowd, then started crudely bumping and grinding. The boy, Moke, decided that coming to the Gayety might not have been such a bright idea after all.

Deftly, unexpectedly the stripper unzipped herself and then tried to make a production out of getting her gloves off while the dress loosened from the rear. Somebody in the back yelled "Take it off." But that only made her slow down. She held up one loose glove and toyed with the empty fingertips. The expression on her face said: "Shall I?" Perfunctory applause. The joker in the back yelled, "Put it back on." Several guffaws. Sporadic clapping. She slid the glove down a few inches and stopped. Again her face said: "Shall I?" Sluggish applause. Now she was haughty. She slid the glove two inches back up and waited. Somebody moaned. Then it came again: "Shall I?" Brighter applause. Arrogantly she threatened to pull the glove back up to the elbow. Prolonged dutiful applause. Off came the glove. Relieved applause.

With this incentive she danced gaily out along the runway, writhing, writhing, so that with each twist the gown revealed more thigh, a pair of filmy panties, the elusive wing of a gauzy brassiere. She passed above Moke, trailing a dense cloud of perfume, then edged back. The gown was suddenly scooped between her knees and dropped to the runway. Obedient applause from the well-trained clappers. Her body was suddenly horizontal above the fallen gown, skin glistening with tiny beads of perspiration, humping, humping, then up, heels tapping, whirling. She kicked the gown contemptuously into the pit and scampered back to the stage, rolling now to the drumbeat, favoring the crowd with a distracting fingerlength view beneath her waistband. Secretly, facing the curtains, she was working at the catches of her brassiere. As it fell away, she eyed the crowd longingly over her shoulder and twitched, then again, working herself into a shimmy. By the time she spun around, her breasts were flailing so fast they were nearly invisible. A cres-

cendo was quickly attained by the band, a cymbal crashed. "Ladies and gentlemen," the voice rose exultantly, "the fabulous Hazel Storm!" Hazel smiled a hideous orgasmic smile. Her lipstick was drawn a good quarter inch shy of her upper lip.

Moke tore the wrapper off his White Owl cigar and lighted up. He dragged on it hard and let the acrid smoke accumulate a certain pressure before huffing. This was his first trip home to Cincinnati since leaving for college. Moke's parents had taken the occasion of his graduation from high school as a signal to change their lives, to finally realize their dream of moving to Florida. His father accepted a new position as General Manager of WTSF, a South Florida radio station owned by a fundamentalist Christian organization called the Terresonna Bible Ranch, Inc. Actually the "ranch" was a former Air Force base with motels added and a swimming pool, golf course, auditorium, and various inane luxuries of the S & H Green Stamp variety—but none of the simple pleasures of home that Moke longed for. The Bible Ranch sold packaged vacations to Northern religious groups who wanted to mix Christ with their sunshine. While the radio station was a commercial, not a strictly religious, enterprise, Moke was alarmed to see how readily his parents seemed to have adopted some of the attitudes and habits of these people, whom he regarded as fanatics. Had his leaving home been *this* much of a trauma for them, he wondered? He could never have predicted such an outcome.

Rumbling and screeching contended on the loudspeaker. The band slid into "They Don't Wear Pants on the Other Side of France." The master of ceremonies' voice sang out: "Our second curvaceous lovely: is she a Persian beauty queen, or the girl next door? Straight from the Sands in Las Vegas, let's have a big hand for sensational Prin-cess *Suzi Sinzinnati*!"

Boom-boom-boom-pow went the drummer. *Boom-pow*. An Arabian belly dancer swayed through the curtain entrance and undulated slowly out across the stage. Her face was veiled up to the eyes. Her costume was pink, translucent, billowy panels front and rear, supported by a double-row of white sapphires on a tricky garter belt, a pink wrap-around cape of the same elusive opacity, jewelled arm bracelets. An anonymous "Go" was heard from the side.

As she moved toward the runway she was nailed by a dazzling red spotlight. Legs spread, thighs tense, knees locked, she lifted and slowly stretched her front pink sash, revealing a bulging silver triangle of gigantic sequins draped with pearl-strings. Down went the sash. The princess dipped, did a deep-knee bend, stroked luscious flesh from ankle to thigh as she rose. Spontaneous applause from the crowd. Again the undulation, out along the runway. Moke himself felt noticeably moved. Next to him a bald-headed man in tortoise-shell glasses made a quiet kissing noise.

The princess crossed to the stage, her back now to the audience, and began unwinding her cape, uncovering a petite sapphire halterstrap. Working, working, working to stage-center, she dropped the cape, and gathering her panels together, yanked them forward, whisked away her veil, and peeped at the audience up-side-down between

shivering buttocks. Appreciative applause. Zing went the panels back in place. The princess dipped, did another deep-knee bend, retrieved her cape and turned, masking her face and upper body behind the taut cape-cloth, then sailing it gracefully above her head. A wave of electricity passed through the crowd. Her face, exposed at last, was strikingly pretty. She was young, sleek through the belly. Strings of pearls dangled beneath each silver-sequined breast cup. Enthusiastic applause.

From the band: *doo*

doo

doo

doo

It had to be moonglow

Way up in the blue

It had to be moonglow

That sent me straight to you.

Princess Suzi was moving now through an effulgence of blue light. She flung aside her panels and danced out along the runway. She was the soul of innocence. Not three feet from Moke, she paused. Nonchalantly she bared one succulent pasty-tipped breast. Her big mascaraed eyes swung around the audience, slowly right, slowly left—Moke felt her eyes meet his and pass on. Casually she unhooked the sapphire band and let the bra swing away. Wild applause. She was instantly bathed in lavender light.

Bum-bum-bum-bum-ba! went the trombone.

Bumpa-pa bum-pa bum-pa

Bum-bum ba-bumpa

Bumpa bumpa bumpa

Bum-bum ba-bumpa

Bumpata bopa

Bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum

Bumpata bopa! Da-li-la Jones!

Suzi shook out her mane, tossed it forward like a wild woman, finger-combed it slowly upwards towards the ceiling. Her arms swirled; her wrists inscribed intricate patterns in the air above her head. Quickly she moved along the narrow runway, toes carefully aimed, feet arched, rump swinging. *Bum-bum-bum-bum-ba!* Moke was suddenly aware of a minor oscillation along the armrest. Next to him, the man in tortoise-shell glasses was discreetly jacking off under his Homburg.

On stage to wild applause the princess peeled off her pink silver-sequined panties and shot-putted them into the wings. Suzi bent, licked a finger, and slid it over one supple cheek. Her eyes grew round with innocence. "You kess me ess?" she pouted. The drummer hit everything in sight.

**Dear Princess Suzi,
I need a friend.**

Most of the village was asleep when Moke stepped off the bus by the Paramount Theatre in the suburb of Indian Park, and headed back down Wooster toward the Good-

wins', where he was staying. The Goodwins lived four houses down and across the street from where he used to live in a house now occupied, tragically, by strangers. He had walked by the house several times and tried to elicit that old comfortable feeling of "home" about the place, but the curtains were strange . . . the house seemed alien and unforgiving. He walked slowly past the house again now, feeling nothing, listening to his heels click on the sidewalk, a dark unrecognized figure staring in at lighted windows.

The Goodwins had retired for the evening, leaving only a small lamp turned on by the stairway. Moke closed the door carefully and creaked up the dim stairs, past the Goodwins' closed bedroom door, and into his own room, where he silently swung the door to and snapped it shut before flipping on the overhead light. The room—the guest room—was as stale-smelling as ever. He stood motionless by the door for a moment, staring dumbly at his suitcase where he had left it on the bed, and then crossed the room and flopped down next to it. For several minutes his eyes rested unblinkingly on the overhead lightglobe with its embellishment of tiny vines.

One question that bothered him particularly was whether he should send her flowers or not. A dozen long-stemmed red roses please—no. It seemed too much like a cliché from some thirties movie. Besides that he only had \$160 until he got back. On the other hand, a note without flowers or *something* might go unnoticed. Candy was definitely out. A mink stole was definitely out. Carnations? Tulips? Geraniums? Moke produced his Spiral notebook and started to write:

Dear Princess Suzi,

I hope you will read this even if I don't send flowers. I can't tell you how impressed I was by one of your recent acts at the Gayety. You have that certain indefinable something

Dearest Suzi,

I don't know how to say this but—I think I could fall in love with you. Coming from a complete stranger, such a statement might seem a little strange, but

Dear Princess Suzi,

I need a friend.

Dear Suzi,

As a talent scout for one of the biggest agencies in Hollywood, I can forecast with some authority, I think—after seeing your recent performance at the Gayety—a bright future for you on the stage and screen. You have that certain indefinable something that men in my field are always on the lookout for.

My recommendation, young lady, would be for you to arrange an immediate screen test and talent evaluation through my offices at the Goodwin Building

Dear Princess Suzi,

You don't know me, but

Moke closed his eyes tightly and gouged hard at the lids with his thumb and forefinger.

Dear Princess Suzi,

My name is Moke Galenaille. I am a medical student at Duke University.

Although I realize this is rather unorthodox, I have become extremely interested in you and your occupation and would like very much to talk to you.

If you are curious about this letter, or bored with life, or for any reason, please get in touch with me by return mail or call me at 337-6929.

Sincerely,
Moke Galenaille



The next morning he decided on the last of the letters—the most honest. He borrowed some bluish, expensive-looking stationery from Mrs. Goodwin and wrote it out in his best handwriting in black ink. After he had the letter neatly folded and sealed, the craziness of the whole idea started to depress him. He decided the only way to save himself and make a reasonable decision about whether or not to mail the letter was to go back to the Gayety that afternoon and see Suzi Sinzinnati again, so he did. The crowd was even larger—word had spread. Suzi Sinzinnati seemed so lovely to him that he experienced an actual physical pain in his chest and wondered if this might not be the first sign of premature heart disease. After the show that day, he ran all the way to the big downtown post office on Government Square to buy a special delivery stamp before the windows slammed shut in that cavernous building at five P. M. But he was seconds too late—the last window in the line closed with deafening finality as he approached it—so he loped back to the Gayety and, still breathless and a little dizzy, convinced the over-rouged ticket lady to take the letter off his hands.

That night around ten-thirty, the phone rang downstairs, and Mrs. Goodwin called him. Who would be calling him here, he wondered, at this hour? His parents? Mrs. Goodwin gave him a curious look as he passed through the living room to the kitchen, where the phone was. He leaned against the dish drainer and picked up the receiver. “Hello?” he said.

“Hello,” said a musical feminine voice. “Is this Moke?”

“Yes.”

“Well, hello, Moke,” said the voice. “I bet you can’t guess who this is . . .”

Suzi was in a rosebud costume this time—petite rosebuds on the nipple-tips of her bra and a big one over the satin triangle of her G-string—absolutely stunning, Moke thought. At the end of her act, Suzi peeled off a rosebud—the bra was a cut-out with rosebud pasties—and held it up. Several hands waved around him, but Suzi came straight to him and handed him the pasty. He felt

the warmth of her hand for a moment and then she danced away.

Past midnight, and Moke stood out under the marquee in the appointed spot, the wind in his eyes, fingering the sequins on the pasty inside his coat pocket. He could just make out the flanks and tail of the equestrian statue at the end of Garfield Place half-a-block up. The headlights from the thin stream of cars turning off Garfield up Vine Street slid across the horse’s tail and made fiery balls of light in the gigantic plate glass windows of the City Library, long since closed for the night. He checked his watch—it was now a good half-hour since the furtive crowd of men had staggered off in all directions, the Gayety bulbs had gone out, and the candy butcher—300 pounds and sporting an Elvis haircut—had looked him over and locked up. Moke started playing a game of *which* pair of lights would be the police cruiser and *what* he would say when they pulled over: “*It’s all right, Officer, I’m not trying to break into the Gayety or anything—heh-heh. I’m just waiting for one of the strippers to get her clothes on*”—something like that.

One of the Gayety doors opened and Hazel Storm and another girl came out. Neither of them looked at him. They stood off to Moke’s left, talking. Hazel edged down to the curb as if she was about to hail a taxi. The other girl didn’t seem to know what she was going to do, and then Moke realized with a start that it was Suzi. “Oh, I didn’t recognize you,” he said, going over. She looked at him intently; her face seemed recently scrubbed clean. Close up, she had big, impressive eyes.

“Well,” she said, “It’s pretty hard without my fake eyelashes.” She smiled up to him out of the corners of her eyes. She was shorter than he expected, maybe 5’7”.

“Are you Moke?”

“Yeah.”

“I was hoping it would be you.”

“How could you guess?”

“Oh, when the runway lights turn on, you can see everybody pretty easily. You fit the description.”

“Hey, where shall we go?” Moke said.

“I want you to meet someone first,” Suzi said.

“Moke, this is Hazel Storm. Hazel, this is Moke. . . *how* do you pronounce your last name?”

“Gail-nail.”

“Nice to make your acquaintance,” Hazel said, staring at the sidewalk. She was at least forty.

“Actually, I’m starved,” Suzi said. They agreed to look for a place to eat.

“You want to come too?” Moke said to Hazel.

“We stick together pretty much,” Hazel said, pointing awkwardly at Suzi.

“Terrific,” Moke said, almost cheerfully enough. What he thought was: “Terrific!”

He felt he might go into a swoon just talking to her.

Still, he was elated. He thought of himself back at the Goodwins, leaning against the dish drainer and talking to Suzi on the phone. And now *here*—it was hard to believe. He wasn’t going back there tonight for anything. He felt

reckless, desperate. Let the Goodwins think he was staying with his aunt and uncle. Maybe the women would lead him into a trap; maybe he would get mugged in an alley, stabbed to death, his undiscovered body mouldering for weeks in a thin puddle of oily lettuce leaves, potato peelings, tea bags and coffee grounds next to some garbage cans with rats scrabbling over his shoelaces and sucking out his eyesockets at three A.M. Maybe they would take him back to their hotel and Suzi would casually take her clothes off and ask for money. He only had \$150 left, but he didn't want to think about that. He was going to play it by ear all the way and find out what was going to happen. Suzi was the most attractive girl who had ever paid any attention to him. Maybe she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen; his throat was thick with lust; he felt he might go into a swoon just talking to her. She was priceless—even with her hair pulled back in a knot as it was now and in this nondescript sack dress with small green polkadots. They walked up Vine Street, bright and deserted and dreamlike.

"What kind of doctor are you studying to be?" Suzi said.

"Maybe a psychiatrist," Moke said, "or a brain surgeon. I don't know yet for sure."

"Oh, I *thought* maybe that was it. Is that why you wanted to talk to me?"

"Yeah, *that* was the reason," Moke said, teasingly.

"Oh, you," Suzi said.

"He's kind of cute," Hazel said. Suzi looked slightly embarrassed.

Hazel hobbled along in high heels as if she had never learned to walk in them properly, her neck tilted back and her nose held high in a ludicrous imitation of *hauteur*. She was asked along as a chaperone, Moke figured, in case he turned out to be a rapist or a purse snatcher. These women probably had passes made at them all the time.

"Here's a place," Suzi said. They went in. It was a brightly lit cafeteria-diner smelling of mustard and burned grease, with a long stainless steel lunch counter and several burly truckdriver types sitting on barstools and at some smokey tables in the rear. It was packed, considering the hour—quarter-to-one on the Coke-clock over the grill. Heads rubbered around as they entered, and Moke noticed worriedly that Suzi and Hazel were the only women in the place. They avoided the fixed stares and proceeded to take trays and gawk at the wrapped sandwiches, sweating juice glasses, and an array of pies. The room had grown noticeably quieter. Suzi, and then Moke, chose big 60¢ glasses of orange juice and then stood waiting for Hazel to make up her mind. "Hey, mister," she yelled to the grill chef who was ignoring her, "you got any footlong hot dogs?"

"How do you like me without my make-up?" she said.

Hazel sat munching her hot dog and dabbing mustard from the corners of her mouth with a balled up Kleenex.

"You're younger than I thought you would be," Suzi said.

"So are you," Moke said. "How old are you?"

"That's for me to know and you to find out," Suzi said.

"Is Suzi your real name?" She sipped her straw thoughtfully.

"Uh-huh."

"You don't lie very well." She gave him a guilty but endearing look, like a child confident of the sympathy of an irritated parent.

"How do you like me without my make-up?" she said, testing him, changing the subject.

"Sensational—you're a knock-out either way. You were by far the favorite dancer up there, you know. I mean—I mean—with all due respect to Hazel, who dances a mean number. But I was wondering why they didn't feature you, like—what's-her-name?"

"Well, aside from the fact that she jerks off the manager before *and* after every show, I can't think of any reason either," Suzi said.

"You shouldn't say that," Hazel said, her mouth full of half-chewed bun.

"Well, it's true," Suzi said.

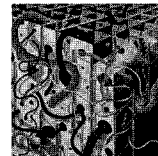
"It sounds vulgar," Hazel said.

"The real reason is I haven't been dancing very long," Suzi said. "I'm just a novice. And nobody knew what I was going to look like when they booked us. So—you know. That's the way the mop flops, to coin a phrase . . ."

"It doesn't seem fair," Moke said. "They should consider themselves lucky even to have you." He wished he could get the stupid, sheepish smile off his face as he said it. "I hope that doesn't sound ingratiating," he said. "*I mean it.*"

"That's nice of you," Suzi said.

"He really is very sweet," Hazel said. "Don't you think?"



The jukebox whirled and a platter skittered onto the turntable.

*Once there were greenfields
warmed by the sun
Once there were valleys
where rivers used to run
Once there were blue skies
with white clouds high above
Once they were part of
our everlasting love . . .*

"God, that's a sad song," Suzi said.

What was he going to do now? He started to feel desperate again. He thought of his blue and red airline ticket tucked away in the breast pocket of his madras jacket hanging in the Goodwins' guest room closet. What *could* he do? Fly back to the Florida wasteland with its

hayfever and palmetto bugs and Bible Ranch fanatics? While away three lonely weeks, suffocating in the salt-sea breezes and humoring his parents? Then drive the nineteen hours back to Duke for three more years of anxiety and humiliation? His empty mailbox. His palms sweating in chemistry class or so icy cold he would press them between his thighs and the curved wooden seat until the circulation was cut off and he would have to shake them in order to write again, watching his white knuckles furiously inscribing formulas for page after page.

*It's now or never, Elvis said.
Come hold me tight
Kiss me, my darling
Be mine tonight
To-mor-row
will be too late
It's now or never
My love won't wait.*

**“You should go south for a while,”
Moke said. “The sun would do you good.”**

“How long will you be here,” Moke said to Suzi.

“Our show ends in just two more days,” she said.

“Then another group comes?” She nodded.

“Where will you go?” She looked at Hazel.

“No place,” Suzi said.

“No place! Don’t you have a circuit? I mean, I thought you would move on to some other city like Baltimore or St. Louis.”

“No. We’re quitting for a while.”

“You must be sick of cities.”

“Oh, wow,” Suzi said. “Sick and bored.”

“You should go south for a while,” Moke said. “The sun would do you good.”

“Where to?” she said.

“Oh,”—he moved his arm in a vague, sweeping gesture—“almost anywhere, just so it’s south. You could easily come south with me,” Moke said. “I’ve got a place in Florida.”

“Florrrrida!” Suzi said. “Oh, wow.”

“Oh, we couldn’t possibly do that!” Hazel said. Moke looked at Suzi for some clue to explain Hazel’s presumption of authority.

“Maybe Suzi *could*,” he said. “You wouldn’t have to come.”

“Well, honey, we can’t afford it, for one thing,” Hazel said to Suzi, who had immediately warmed to the idea.

“Think about it,” Moke said. “Three days from now we could be on the beach! Just think of it!”

“Oh, wow,” Suzi said. “Would *that* be beautiful.”

They left the restaurant and walked some more. The moon was out over Garfield Place, the city streets almost empty and peaceful. The women wanted to know what his father did for a living, and he told them how his father managed WTSF in Terresonna, Florida, and liked to play golf a lot and was pretty religious, and so on. And he told them about the Terresonna Bible Ranch, which owned the station. Then he told them about Indian Park and

Hazel said she wasn’t sure but wasn’t that quite a wealthy suburb here and Moke said well it was a pretty damned nice place as far as he was concerned—no doubt about that. Suzi wanted to know was Terresonna on the ocean and everything and Moke told them about how Terresonna was in the exact heart of the Florida Gold Coast and had great beaches and seashells and terrific royal-palm-lined avenues and exotic places to eat and indoor and outdoor swimming pools in practically every house and yacht harbors and Chris Crafts parading up and down the Intercoastal waterway and nightblooming jasmine and tropical vegetation of every sort and even banana trees not to mention the fact that it was a secret watering spot for the very rich and had unbelievable sunshine that gave you a special golden-brown tan that made your body feel like silk or something and was one of the neatest places he had ever visited let *alone* lived in. Moke mentioned how he had this “in” with the Terresonna Bible Ranch and they owned a lot of real estate in Terresonna and he could probably get them these fantastic oceanfront suites for a couple of weeks at a ridiculously cheap rate and Hazel started acting very suspicious and said she’d heard *that* one before about how some people’s ridiculously cheap rate was the next person’s excuse for murder let alone shady deals, unethical rackets, crossing interstate lines with stolen property, illegal prostitution, the Mann Act, off-track betting, bookies getting their brains kicked out, and the Mafia.

“Stop it,” Suzi said, and Moke, who was about to say, “Oh for crying out loud,” didn’t say anything. The three of them stopped dead in their tracks. “I think we ought to go back to our room now,” Hazel said, as Moke sank back against the nearest building and was suddenly very tired.

“I really wish you would come,” Moke said to Suzi. “I’d even pay your airfare down. Don’t worry about the money—that’s the last thing to worry about.”

“That’s very nice of you,” Suzi said.

“Thanks but no thanks,” Hazel said. “How does that grab you?”

“Oh, stop being so rude, would you!” Suzi said. “My God, you’re a case!” and she took Hazel off to the side. The two stood ten feet away from him, yakking for quite some while—Moke thought he could distinguish bitchy, paranoid tones coming from the old woman, supplicating inflections from Suzi, but he wasn’t certain. This is the way the world ends, Moke thought, surrounded by twenty-story office buildings in the middle of the night—and then chuckled at his own sentimentality. He was getting almost too tired to care. A wizened drunk wandered by and gave Moke a distant Howarya ol’ buddy. Same to you, ol’ buddy, Moke waved back. Then Suzi was coming toward him as if in a dream; she had a very serious expression on her face and he could smell her perfume and God was she beautiful—and he realized for the first time how much she resembled. . . Julie, Julie Greenway, who a couple of days earlier had ruined his life by telling him she never wanted to see him again—just a miraculous, physical resemblance, no doubt about it—and he realized how stupid it was to care about what happened now as much as he actually did care and then she said: “We’ve talked this over and we’re going to give

your offer serious consideration.” Moke held his breath. “I really want to come,” she said. “I just have to talk her into it.”

“Can’t *you* come then? Why worry about her?” Moke said.

“I have to,” Suzi said. “She’s a wreck. I really ought to get her back.” They both looked over at Hazel who was positioned by the curb in her waiting-for-a-taxi pose. In the baggy purple dress, she looked indescribably slutty. Suzi sighed.

“There’s something you should understand, Moke,” Suzi said, bringing her face very close to his. A startling amount of pain was visible in her lovely eyes. “I wouldn’t tell you this except that I think you’re probably very sweet and will understand. You see . . .,” she said, “Hazel is my mother.”

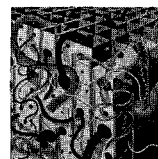
They arranged it. Every day Suzi came to meet him at the Library at two, four, and six—between acts—smelling of lilacs and smiling in her plain polkadot dress, hair pulled back, and her white-rimmed sunglasses to cover up the heavy mascaraed eye-job. At two and four, she had ten minutes. At six, they had time for dinner and a stroll along Garfield Place before the evening show. Always she had her hair pulled back “like a school teacher” and the sunglasses and usually she had nothing on under the drab dress she had thrown over her head in order to run out the alley door and up the street to the Library and Moke. It was hot during the day but pleasant in the evenings and the pigeons cooed and waddled around the park benches, and Moke and Suzi would sometimes sit and he would stare up through the blue air above Suzi’s head, above the buildings and the Hudepohl Beer sign and the faintly waving branches of the young sycamore trees along Garfield Place and marvel at his incredible luck and wish this would never end.

Her real name was Sonya, it turned out, Sonya Velonis. That she was willing to tell him her real name seemed promising—if it *was* her name. (Obviously her real name couldn’t be Suzi Sinzinnati! Though he *had* gotten used to thinking of her as Suzi.)

They had *not* given him a definite answer the first day about Florida—just that Hazel was thinking it over, and Suzi (Sonya) said *she* “really wanted to.” Then Thursday in the park, Sonya said: “This is going to go over like a pregnant pole-vaulter, but. . .” and she told him they had decided to sign up for another week at the Gayety—the new road show came in on Friday but they were short some dancers and the manager put the pressure on for them to stay on—but *the good thing* about this, she said, was it would give them time to get to know each other better and give the women time to save up some extra money for the Florida trip and for Hazel to get used to the idea. This was a *very positive sign*, Sonya said, that Hazel was serious about the trip because they were both *fed up* with Cincinnati and wanted to get back home—Montreal, of all places: they were Canadians. But winter wasn’t *that* far away, and Hazel wasn’t *that* hot to get back to freezing weather so soon, and Hazel figured they deserved a vacation after “grinding their asses off all summer long with a bunch of filthy people in every filthy slum in every filthy

city in the United States.” Moke wrote to his parents and said he had run into an old college friend—what a coincidence!—a very nice girl who was visiting relatives in Cincinnati and he had asked this girl, and of course her mother, who was in Cincinnati (visiting relatives with her daughter) to come back to Florida with him and they just might do it!

When the “new road show” came in on Friday, Sonya got Moke in through the alley door. He could watch the show whenever he got tired of reading or walking around. The “new star” was a red-haired vixen with cat-eyes and a sleek, sensuous body. Moke had to admit she wasn’t that bad. She would come in wearing a leopard skin under a thick velvet dress and walk back and forth like a debutante and when the faster music started she would peel to the leopard skin and dash around the stage, snarling and hissing and making clawing motions with her fingernails. After that, she would go into her bump-and-grind routine; she would untie her hair, a gorgeous full-bodied cascade of curling orange mane, and cup her breasts and then slide her fingers slowly down across her belly and under the G-string and touch herself and then she would lick her fingers and wink. And she liked to talk to the audience: she would say, “It’s the *only* thing there is, Baby,” rubbing herself. “It’s the *only* thing that really matters. Oh, do it to me!” And the fast music and loud drumming would pick up and she would start her pelvis bumping and humping and climax with three or four high-pitched screams of parodied ecstasy. Moke asked Sonya what she thought of the new “star,” and Sonya said she was okay except that she was a lesbian and was always trying to feel her up. Moke said does that happen very often backstage and Sonya said are you kidding it’s an occupational liability. Moke said, “Really! Who does it?” Sonya said: “Everybody except me and my mother.”



One afternoon before dinner they were walking along Garfield Place. Sonya liked to hold hands as they walked and talked. The pigeons cooed. The rush hour traffic poured out of Shillitoes Parking and off Vine Street and gathered in slow-moving lines on either side of the park, gleaming pastel masterpieces from Detroit’s keenest-eyed designers, Oldsmobiles and Buicks with brand new tires heading home to Madeira and Amberly Village and Indian Park with seats and trunks full of spice-racks and ironing boards and vacuum cleaners and fall fashions and back-to-school supplies and end-of-the-season-sale bikinis at half-off and Ricky Nelson’s new 45 “Young Emotions” and Camay beauty soap and Lavis and plastic garbage bags and spot remover.

It made Moke depressed for some reason. Sonya wanted to know what was wrong.

“Oh, I’m thinking about Julie Greenway,” he said.

“Is she the girl you just broke up with?” Sonya said.

"She's the one," Moke said.

He had already told Sonya—the first night—that there was "this girl" he had broken up with, and Sonya had seemed, you know, really understanding about it and everything. But he hadn't wanted to talk about it in front of Hazel. Sonya had said: "Do you make a habit of picking up burlesque girls?" and Moke said "No—this is the first time. Up until yesterday, I was going steady with the same girl for the last three years!" and even Hazel seemed to understand that, and to soften up and look at him a little wistfully. It made sense to them; maybe it made him seem less threatening. Now that he was alone with Sonya and she looked so much like Julie (and here he was in Cincinnati, his old lost home) and everything seemed almost perfect—he was suddenly impressed by how crazy it all was, what a nutty fantasy he was trying to act out, what a blow he was setting himself up for—it was incredible. Within two weeks, at the best, he would pack Sonya off to Montreal and probably never see her again. What a totally screwed up world.

"Did she break up with you," Sonya said, "or did you break up with her?"

"I—she. . . I don't know. I can't figure out *what* happened. A little bit of both. . . ."

"Go ahead," Sonya said. "Tell me everything."

He did. He told her about working in the hospital that summer, about Duke. He told her about how sometimes he just wanted to say "Fuck it all" and to take off across country on a Honda 350 and work in the fields and pick grapes and "be physical." "I mean, maybe that's my true destiny," he said. He told her about how *he* never really wanted to be a doctor anyway—it was really Julie's idea. Now that this fantasy of theirs was exploded, why should he go on living as if it still existed?

"You're really very sweet, you know that?" Sonya said. "I really like you."

"I like you too," Moke said . . . "You know something?" Moke said.

"What?"

"The craziest part is that you remind me of her—Julie. You remind me of Julie. I hope that doesn't make you upset." She thought about it.

"No, how could it? It's very flattering."

"I do want to get to know *you*."

"I want to get to know you too. I think you're basically a very nice person."

"You're the nicest person I've ever met," Moke said.

She leaned over and kissed him on the cheek. Moke brushed his lips across her cheek and kissed her mouth. It was a beautiful mouth—a hot, stinging, luscious kiss.

"I'll give you thirty minutes," Sonya said breathlessly, "to cut that out."

Hazel will never allow Sonya to be alone with him after show hours. "You have to try to understand about my mother," Sonya says. "She's had a rotten life; she doesn't trust people. She was involved in Chicago way back when; she's seen people murdered."

"Okay," Moke says.

Moke has been sleeping in a \$3/night room on the tenth floor of the same hotel Sonya and Hazel are staying in—and every night before going to bed carefully checking the lumpy mattress for bedbugs. The women are sleeping until almost noon, rushing to the Gayety, working (except for breaks) until almost midnight, and then wandering about with him until three A.M.

Wednesday that week Sonya has surprised Moke at eleven in the morning in his shabby tenth-floor room and told him excitedly that Hazel has finally agreed to go! She is totally fed up with decadent Northern cities; filthy-minded perverts on every street corner, grime on every railing, trash in every trashcan, sweltering overcast skies without a drop of sun, and "foul-mouthed bitchy faggoty managers who aren't satisfied with a free feel now and then, but have to insult you viciously as often as possible—not to mention the art of the dance—just to get their rocks off."

Sonya has dragged Moke down to Shillitoes, that excellent store, where they are working their way through the women's swimsuit section—right next to slips and lingerie. Several decapitated mannikins, in various states of undress, hover atop garment racks—and are artfully arranged around the walls—causing Moke continually to avert his eyes. In a place like this it is pretty difficult to avoid looking suspicious, Moke thinks. How do you walk past a brassiere, for instance? It isn't easy. The eyes mustn't linger on these filmy creations or the vice cops will be on you in a minute.

Sonya has accumulated an armful of bathing suits. "Sit in this seat," she says, pointing, "and I'll try these on for you, love." He walks over, sits obediently in a corner between a mirrored pillar and a wall of blouses, grateful for a respite from the flying undergarments. Sonya disappears in the direction of the dressing rooms.

In two minutes she is back and barefoot, wearing a bright yellow Jantzen one-piece with meshed scoops at the sides—which shows off her sleek belly flesh. She parades back and forth before the mirrored pillar, giving him a bewitching kittenish smirk, spins and narrows her eyes critically at the mirror-image of her back and the line of the suit across her bottom, suddenly snaps elastic, giving him an instantaneous heart-stopping view, and flits back to the dressing room. The next suit is a turquoise bikini, alarmingly spare. The ritual is repeated seven or eight times—he loses track. A saleswoman appears and tries to involve herself, but Sonya ignores her.

Sonya marches out in yet another stunning creation, eyes herself in the mirror, rocks up on her toes, back on her heels, flexes her thigh muscles, does a deep knee-bend, takes a deep breath, slowly exhales and smiles—idiotically. "What is this?" he wonders, "her daily workout?"

She comes out finally, ready to go. Moke stands up, jiggling change. She snags his wrist. "I could only get three on under my dress," she whispers, slipping a tiny folded flag of cloth into his hand. "Can you get this into your pants? Oh, please." Without thinking, he gingerly

pockets the thing, figuring it to be a handkerchief, and only after it is pressed snugly against his leg and they are heading airily for the doors, does the implication of what she has said register.

Oh-my-God, they are *shoplifting*—sirens start to go off in his brain. He has never stolen *anything* in his life except a box of caps from a dime store once when he was five years old and he is still guilty about *that*. They could be busted any minute and so long to Medical School if that ever happens. He brushes his hair back nervously and realizes his forehead is beaded with sweat. Sonya is dawdling over a glass case full of jewelry. Ye gods! Every Store Dick in the place probably has them under surveillance. He mustn't look too fidgety or scan the aisles for the law. Just stay cool and act very interested in tiny pearl earrings and sixteen kinds of ugly floral sunbursts. Then when Sonya smiles, all nonchalance and regal aplomb, what else is there to do but follow her smoothly out the revolving doors and into the wave of sultry August air and out along the grainy sidewalks of the Queen City, gawking at the crossfire of happy shoppers, the chaos of utility poles and elegant black asphalt, and pray to high Heaven that the Store Dick is not there now in that vacuum you feel near your spine, getting ready to pinch your arm between his bulbous nicotine-stained fingers, flash the badge, and haul you off to the clink in his conspicuously unmarked car with the gun-metal blue Smith & Wesson automatic in its carefully oiled dashmounted holster.

Safe on a bench at Garfield Place there are a few things to hash out.

"Oh wow," Sonya says. "Now we have to go. There's no stopping us—no matter what Hazel says or does."

"God, Sonya, you have me scared shitless. What are you trying to do?"

"Did you see me come? I hoped you wouldn't mind. I do have my little turn-ons that take a while to get used to."

"You mean in the store?"

"Right in front of the mirror, silly! Didn't you see me? I was absolutely beautiful."

"I don't think so," Moke says, puzzled. "You mean you did it right in the middle of the store?"

"Well, I got it started in the dressing room. You know. But I had the orgasm in front of the mirror."

"God, Sonya. You are too much."

"I hope you don't mind," she says, looking suddenly worried. "Sometimes I get so incredibly pent up after dancing. . . I started to get so excited thinking how gorgeous I would look in these new things! I used to masturbate a lot," Sonya says, "sometimes six times a day."

"That must be some kind of record," Moke says.

"I doubt it," Sonya says. "You don't *know* how many oversexed people there are in this world. . . . Of course, at first I was very, very private about it; but when I was about thirteen I branched out into doing it in public or in boring classes or during the horrible long sermons when I was a member of the choir. I always had a fantasy of doing it with the collection plate, but I could never figure out *how* exactly. Must have been pretty horny all right."

"*How* could you do it?"

"All I did then was cross my legs and squeeze the thigh

muscles together over and over. It's easy for girls. God, I have a hard time sometimes keeping from coming just walking to the drugstore in a pair of tight Levi's!"

"But didn't you make noise or anything?"

"I would just disguise it by having a coughing fit or clearing my throat or pretending to lean over and scratch my leg or something. No one ever had any idea what I was doing, of course. I barely did myself. They just thought I coughed and itched a lot—a nervous adolescent, you know. . . ."

"Then when I was sixteen or so, I was going out with this older man who kept taking me to restaurants where there were like tablecloths that hung down all around and the lighting was low and 'romantic.' He kept feeding me spicy foods and luscious liquor and the usual lines, and he never suspected that while I was demurely eating with one hand. . . ."

"No!"

"Yes! It was all I could do to keep a straight face. Some of the time I wanted to tip over the table and pull my skirt up to my belly button, no matter who was watching. But luckily I resisted that impulse, which was a good thing. I mean, besides the possibility of getting busted and everything, I found out I really dig doing it close to people sometimes, without them knowing it. . . like with you in that store we were in. It doesn't hurt anybody, right?"

"Right."

"The reason I'm telling you this, Moke. . . . You see, well. . . . I know we're going to be seeing a lot of each other in Florida if we go, and I want you to know that I like you a lot. I really do. But I do have my quirks that you should know about. You might have the idea that because of my job at the Gayety and everything that I'm a certain kind of girl."

"No, not at all. What do you mean by that?"

"Well, this may come as a surprise to you, Moke. But, in spite of my strange life and oversexed habits, I'm still what is known as. . . 'a virgin.' Pretty astonishing, isn't it?"

"Too much," Moke says.

"It's just one of those things I happen to feel very strongly about, and I want you to understand that, okay?"

"Okay."

"I knew you would understand! The reason I agreed to come in the first place was because I was convinced you are such an understanding person, Moke Galenaille, and, lucky for me, you really are!" She kisses him hard on the mouth. "Uh-oh, now I bet I've gone and wetted through all three swimsuits!"

Then she rushes off to the Gayety for her second-to-last day of humping.

**Her skin is peaches, strawberries,
raspberries, apples, boysenberries,
rhubarb.**

"The way it was with Julie and me. . . ." Moke says, "everything was so magnified. It was the separation—partly. Like, there we were a thousand miles apart and just dying for each other, longing, longing, writing letters

every day. Like the biggest emotional event of every day was just going to the university post office. No kidding. And some days she would write me ten or fifteen-page letters. We got to the point where she would write to me in the nude—that was a rule—she *had* to write in the nude and I would get these incredible erections even if she was just talking about how she blew her Calc exam because I knew she was in the nude when she wrote that. Then I would write back an eleven-page letter telling her about this terrible erection her last letter had given me and how I had had to skip dinner because of it—and, you know, things like that. We made fun of ourselves, but it was killing us. It was really killing us.”

“I know what you mean,” Sonya says.

Moke stares out across the perfect sweep of curving metal to the hood emblem of his 1954 orange Pontiac: it’s an Indian head with a light inside, though now the light is out. They are parked at the top of the circular drive at the Terresonna Municipal Beach. The crickets are singing their hearts out in the sumac and scrub palm thickets along the oceanfront.

“And then we’d have these two-or-three-day visits over Christmas or Easter, and we’d spend the whole time in bed in the hotel room, just lying in bed all day making love. . . . And talking. Just. . . . We wouldn’t even eat! We’d forget about eating and get absolutely starved and go out for a walk. Then when we finally did eat, everything was so delicious it practically killed you—it practically gave you another orgasm.”

“It must be terrible to lose something like that.”

“Oh, we were so dumb. We should have gotten married or something, but we were too young to know any better.”

“I don’t think marriage cures everything necessarily.”

“No. Of course not. I don’t think so either. But. . . .”

“I’m not going to get married until I’m at least twenty-eight or twenty-nine. I want to meet a lot of different people. I want to travel. There’s so much to *do*.”

“Yeah,” Moke says. “I know what you mean. Still, if you happen to meet someone you want to *stay* with. . . what do you do?”

“I guess if I had had a better example of domestic bliss in my own family, I’d be more impatient about it, about, you know, about running out and getting married or something. Hazel and my father fight all the time. You know. They aren’t divorced, but they can’t be around each other for five minutes without going berserk. Hazel starts throwing dishes. My father has to leave.”

“Why does she do it? Because of what happened to her in Chicago?”

“No, not really. It’s not all her fault.” Pause.

It is hard to believe that Julie had been sitting in that same car seat not twelve months before and that now Sonya is here. Sonya seems far more gorgeous than Julie. . . . from a purely physical point of view—he recognizes that now—it isn’t really disloyal to admit that, merely a fact. Sonya is so. . . . healthy and sensuous, so velvety and uninhibited. Her fingers and toes are works of art. Her proportions are so cleverly turned out, so remarkable. This was evidently what Keats had been talking about all along. Now he can feel it—now he understands.

“God, what a beautiful night. Why don’t we walk?” Moke says.

“Great.” She slides out of her sandals, pulls on the doorhandle and gets out. Moke pauses a moment; watches her get out, framed in the open doorway, a sleek Aphrodite, cunningly revealed in the same turquoise bikini she has worn all day but no less dazzling or intimidating in his eyes. Stunning. She turns expectantly, sees he has not moved, and smiles bewitchingly. She is a woman who does not mind being admired. All poise and feminine grace. Willowy animal vitality. Moke leaps out, slams the door harder or more zestfully than need be and joins the divine creature. Together they walk out on the municipal pier among the deserted picnic tables as far as the beach-end and lean there against the railing, the canvas roof gently flapping overhead, crumpled napkins—cerily white—stirring in the wire containers, the immense concave of black ocean and night sky, the surf sucking and squirting, the smell of salt and green peppers and night-blooming jasmine. “You know what?” Moke says.

“What?”

“I’ve got a feeling this is going to be a good night. I really feel like—you know. Tonight, I think, is going to be good.” Sonya slowly unbuttons the last three wood-buttons on his Hawaiian shirt and presses the cups of her bikini breasts against his bare flesh, sliding her cheek along his shoulder, pressing her closed eyes against his throat. “You angel,” he says, kissing her. “You perfect beautiful angel.”

“Let’s go down to the beach,” she says softly. They follow the railing around to the stairs, descend to the dark beach. Moke unties his shoes, throws them off. The tide is out; the beach is enormous, acres of dimpled and scalloped white sand slipping and sinking now between their toes. In the shadows beneath the pier they walk through a forest of pilings. Moke corners Sonya against one of the pilings, embraces her, squeezes her gently against the coarse wood. She melts, forgets herself, raises her turquoise nylon mons against his hard thigh, shivers, rocks slowly back, touches.

They walk on out of the shadow of the pier into the moonlit fringe of glistening wet-packed sand close to the water; a lavish gush of foam bathes them to the ankles. They stroll steadily north past the Swim at Your Own Risk sign, past a large wash-in of beached debris, holding each other, stumbling, kissing, collapsing finally in a tangle of arms and legs.

“Oh, God,” Sonya says breathlessly, “I never thought we would make it to Florida. It’s so beautiful I can’t believe it.” She unsnaps her halter and flips it.

“*You’re* so beautiful I can’t believe it,” Moke says, taking her left breast to his mouth. He is convinced it is the prettiest, most succulent, he has ever seen, in or out of girly magazines.

“Oh, Moke. . . . Moke, what’s that light down there?”

“What light?”

“By the pier.” He turns and looks. A bright oval of light is visible beside the pier railing, perhaps near the roof.

“It’s just a spotlight, isn’t it? Wasn’t it there before?”

"I don't think so," Sonya says. "I don't remember it."
"See if it moves," Moke says. They watch intently for a moment; nothing happens. "In the meantime . . .," Moke says. He takes her other breast to his mouth, resting his head against her belly, and trains one eye on the fugitive light. Slowly, the eye closes. Sonya is raised up on her elbows, staring toward the pier. Her skin is as sweet-smelling as fresh peaches, strawberries, raspberries, apples, boysenberries, rhubarb.

"Uh-oh, that light's moving. I think it's coming this way," Sonya says.

"What would a light be doing walking down the beach?" Moke says. He sits up and looks. Sure enough, there's this frigging light down by the pilings, flashing around. Sonya stands awkwardly, breasts bouncing, and starts brushing sand off her legs. With just her bikini bottoms on, she seems suddenly very unprotected and bare-looking.

"Uh-oh, where's my bra?" she says. Moke hops up on his hands and knees and feels around at every probable black object he can see in the dimness: a coconut husk, a piece of driftwood, several stiff, crackly sections of dried seaweed.

"Here it is," Sonya says. As he stands up, she already has it fastened. The damned light is bigger than ever, a huge cone of whiteness glaring in their eyes. "Oh, God," Sonya says. "I hope we don't get in any trouble."

"There's nothing illegal about walking on the beach," Moke says. They start walking.

"Who could it be?" Sonya says.

"Probably just some undersea monster, or a motorcycle gang—or maybe your mother," Moke says.

"Oh, you," Sonya says.

A hundred yards on down they can see it is nothing but a cop with a big silver flashlight. They walk slowly towards him, holding hands.

"What seems to be the trouble, Officer?" Moke says. He is an old mother with white hairs growing out of his ears and a rudimentary mouth. He doesn't smile.

"That your car up there—'54 Catalina with a cream roof?"

"That's mine all right," Moke says, "the orange one."

"Let's see your license." Moke pulls out his wallet and hands him the license.

"What'samatter? Am I illegally parked? I didn't see any signs."

"You know it's after midnight, don't you?"

"Is it illegal to park here after midnight? Gee, I didn't know that."

"No, it's not illegal; it's just suspicious-looking. Just one car and so on."

"Sorry, I don't understand."

"Somebody might think it's a stolen car."

"Oh, I see. Well, it's not. It's *not* a stolen car. It's my car."

"I know it's your car. And *you* know it's your car. And *she* knows it's your car. But it looks suspicious, you see what I mean? Just one car and so on." The cop hands Moke his license back. "I wouldn't park here after midnight if I was you."

"Right," Moke says. "Well, we'll just be moving right

along then, Officer. We just thought it would be nice to take a little stroll along the beach here. It's such a nice spot and everything."

"Yeah, I know all about that," the Officer says. "You may not know it, but I know all about what you was doing down there. You may not know it, but I was young once. I know all about that."

"I don't want to see my mother. I just want to be with you."

"If it wasn't so sick, I could laugh," Moke says, turning in at the entrance to the Terresonna Bible Ranch. The Bible Ranch buildings are all dark now except for the ornamental lighting at the "All One in Christ Jesus" Auditorium and the scattered illumined trees in the Garden of Gethsemane Prayer Park, which contains every tree that is indigenous to the Holy Land—some one hundred and twenty-eight in all. Moke steers the Pontiac with its glowing Indian head twice slowly around the swimming pool area, the dark bluish platform of the ten-foot board rising above the palmetto hedge like a frozen, square-eared brontosaurus, its tongue elegantly displayed for some celestial dentist. "Where shall we go now?" Moke says. "You think Hazel's asleep yet?"

"I doubt it."

"How about this?" Moke says. "How about this?" He pulls off next to the hedge in a leafy inlet adjacent to the pumphouse, kills the motor, and kisses her, kisses her, kisses her. The kiss lasts twenty minutes. Sonya is trembling, then quietly crying? This is an amazing reaction as far as Moke can tell. Without breaking the kiss, Moke touches her cheek. Yes, he sees, it is definitely wet. He stops for breath and looks around. They are shielded on three sides by walls of vegetation; the fourth side offers a panoramic view of the Plain of the Burning Bush, a wide open field of crabgrass. "What's the matter, Sonya?" He holds her. She hides her face on his chest and presses close to him.

"I want to stay with *you* tonight. I don't want to go back."

"You don't have to go back for a while."

"I don't want to go back at all."

"Why? Where could we go?"

"I don't want to see my mother. I just want to be with you."

"You don't have to see her. She'll be asleep. I'll come over early in the morning and we can go some place and be alone." Pause.

"Moke, I have to tell you something horrible," Sonya says.

"Wait-a-minute," Sonya says. "The eggs are burning."

This is what she tells him, trembling and crying: Her father, she whispers, who is a beautiful, passionate Greek man, impulsive and loving and considerate, had *done* things to her when she was thirteen, things he should have

done to her mother. Hazel knew about these things, which was a terrible, terrible burden, she whispers. But even more terrible, she whispers, was that *she* liked what her father did to her. This was why her father went away and why they could never live together again. This was why, she whispers, she tries so hard to get along with Hazel, whose life is such a terrible ruin, such a terrible, terrible ruin.

She has stopped crying. She is smiling ruefully.

Moke cannot help himself: he asks "What did he *do*?" She says she can't possibly tell him, as much as she would like to tell him—it's too difficult. He asks again: "Tell me!"

Sonya whispers: "I would *never* tell you this except that I think I might just probably be in love with you." She kisses him—her cheeks are still wet. Her angelic face is radiant with intensity. She presses her tongue against the roof of her mouth.

"He kissed me here," she whispers—touching herself—"with. . . with the tip of his tongue."

The next morning, their third in Florida—wild with sunshine. Sonya's and Hazel's apartment is in the "celebrity unit" at the Bible Ranch—two big double beds, a kitchenette, deluxe bath, walk-in closet, terrazzo floor, impressive view of Garden of Gethsemane Prayer Park and sun splashing on the Plain of the Burning Bush, vegetation in carefully tended brilliance by the door. For them, all this luxury for \$20/week—the "celebrity rate"—thanks to Moke's father. Already Hazel is bored out of her skull. "You're always running off and leaving me by myself," she says to Sonya this morning. "What kind of vacation is that? Staying out 'til all hours of the night! Leaving me alone. Flouncing around in that skimpy little skintight bikini, popping everybody's eyes out of their heads. I want to be out of here and doing a few things myself! Did you ever think of that? No! Of course not." All of this is a preliminary to walking the six short blocks downtown to try to rent a car at Avis on Main Street, a tactful suggestion Moke has contributed two days before. Finally Hazel flops on her new bargain-basement Panama hat and minces out, nearly tripping on the sandy terrazzo in her toeless wedgies. The jalousies rattle as she slams the door and clack-clocks away.

"Whew," Moke says. Sonya, quietly at the stove in her turquoise bikini, is scrambling eggs barefooted. The sight of her velvety back and fantastic bottom against the white porcelain brings a lump to his throat. God is she beautiful this morning, a bright-haired thoroughbred with two dimples showing above her waistband, the luscious bulging arrogance of her turquoise nylon polka-dotted panties, the leggy nonchalance of a *Vogue* model. Words form in his head: "For a transitory, enchanted moment, man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent"—some quotation he remembers from Freshman English—"compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder." Smiling wistfully, he hangs his chin over Sonya's shoulder and peers down into the skillet. "Good morning, world." He kisses her ear.

"Good morning to you," Sonya says, sliding her hands underneath his shirt and pressing herself full-length into his arms. He kisses her breasts; she touches him through his bathing suit.

"Uh-oh, better close the curtains if we're going to do this," Moke says. The erection is killing him. Sonya whirls to the big windows on the Burning Bush side and quickly pulls the drawstring.

"She'll be back any minute," Sonya says.

"I don't care," Moke says, yanking the front drapes at that end of the room. He opens the door, sticks his head out into the heat-thick morning chirping, eyeballs it in both directions—all clear—slams the door shut, locks it, fastens the safety chain. Sonya shakes her breasts loose, heaves the bra, peels herself free of her turquoise panties, kicks them across the room. "That's one thing I like about you," Moke says, dropping his shirt, collapsing with her on the bed, sliding his eyebrows along sumptuous belly flesh. . . .

"What?" Sonya gasps. He buries his face in her perfumy muff—the nearest he has ever been to such luxury.

"You're so modest!"

"Wait-a-minute," Sonya says. "The eggs are burning." She leaps up, sashays to the stove, deals with the egg problem by dumping them in the sink and flooding them.

"Uh-oh, we can't do it here," Sonya says in desperation. "I can see right through these jalousies." Moke leaps up.

"Put some towels over it," Moke says. "No, wait a minute," he says. "Let's go in here." He runs into the bathroom and turns the shower on full-blast. "Lie down on the floor," Moke says. "If Hazel comes back, I'll duck out and close the bathroom door and you won't have to worry about your clothes or anything."

"Good," Sonya says. She turns herself around and lies down obediently in the middle of the bathroom floor.



Sunday. It is at least a three mile walk to the Bible Ranch, but once he passes through the A&W Root Beer lot and crosses the main drag and some subdivisions it is mostly open country, scrubby fields, farm fences, and an occasional wet cow to share his misery. He will keep to the back roads, he decides, come at the women's room across the Plain of the Soggy Bush, and thus avoid causing a stir among the migrating worshippers. It is the kind of minor strategic problem James Bond has coped with routinely for years, nothing to throw an experienced agent. Just as the hiking is about to seem impossible, he spots the distant rectangle of white stucco, navigates the marshy hinterland, and circles the building, grateful at last for the cement walk and the generous overhang to keep the rain out of his collar. As he taps on Sonya's door, he hopes he

will find Hazel already out on some hectic errand, but as the door swings open he sees instantly he will have no such luck. Hazel is already pacing back and forth, carrying on like a banshee.

"Now here's Dr. Kildare himself," she says sassily, "looking like a drowned idiot, which means you are both going to desert the skaggy old lady in about five minutes and leave me alone all day in this ratty dump. I won't have it! I didn't come all the way down here to spend my vacation in a retirement village! I have needs the same as the next person! And I won't be pushed around and left behind and talked about and *deserted* like a piece of sagging, over-aged meat. Goddammittohell!"

"Oh no," Moke says, "not this."

"Stay out of it," Sonya says, "she's pretty pissed."

"Ooohhh, I think I'm going to *strangle* somebody!" Hazel yells.

"What happened?" Moke says.

"So this is the famous Florida sunshine, is it?" Hazel says—as if he is personally responsible.

"I had a talk with God about it earlier this morning," Moke says, before he can stop himself. "But he said he couldn't do a thing about it."

"Oh, he's cute, isn't he," Hazel says. "He's as cute as they come! I always knew he would turn out to be a cute one, all right. Cute!"

"Your father called," Sonya says, "and tried to talk us into going to church, for one thing. Then a Mr. Roark called and invited us to lunch." Elijah Roark is the founder of Terresonna Bible Ranch.

"Terrific!" Moke says, "some people never know when to quit. I'm awfully sorry about this."

"You think *you're* sorry," Hazel says. "You aren't half as sorry as *I* am, I'll tell you that. What have you got to be sorry about?"

"So Hazel said she would go to lunch," Sonya says. "But now she's upset because she doesn't have the right sort of dress or anything and *I* said *I* wouldn't go."

"*You will go*," Hazel says.

"You don't *have* to," Moke says. "Neither one of you has to."

"I really don't want to," Sonya says.

"*You will go*," Hazel says, "*and that's final! I'm your mother and I say you will go!*"

"I was just going to ask you," Moke says to Sonya, "if you'd like to catch some breakfast somewhere."

"I'd love to," Sonya says.

"Oh no you don't," Hazel says. "You can't leave me alone in this room! I won't permit it! Absolutely not!"

"I certainly didn't pay Sonya's way down here," Moke says, "with the expectation that it would be like *this*. For God's sake, Hazel! Try to be reasonable."

"Now there!" Hazel screams. "I knew it would come to this! Pack the bags!" She yanks a suitcase from under the bed and nearly falls flat on the terrazzo floor. "Pack the bags! This is one twat that cannot be bought! Get out! Get out!"

Moke looks desperately at Sonya and says he will wait for her outside. Head bowed, he steps out and closes the door behind him. He leans against the white stucco and surveys his options: three dripping lawn chairs with pud-

dles in their seats or Hazel's rented Nash Rambler. Muffled rantings resound through the wall. A bed of orange gladiolas soaks up the rain. He gets in the Nash and begins to wait, crossing his fingers for Sonya.

After several minutes Sonya comes out the door, waving a little v-for-victory sign at him. Hazel calls her back. In dread, Moke watches Hazel jawing at the door. Finally Sonya breaks away, leaps the bed of gladiolas, and runs to the car as if nothing had happened. She tosses her head as she climbs in, flipping hair back over her shoulder, and lays the keys in his palm like a promise.

"Hit it," she says. God, is she beautiful. Moke's heart swells with love and relief. He guns the Nash, whips it around like a toy, and throws gravel for twenty feet going out the driveway.

"What did it take?" Moke says, fondling her neck.

"I have to go to lunch with them and be a good girl and let her wear my black dress. After that, we get the car and we can park it somewhere," she says, squeezing his knee, "and make love, like good Christians, until 2 A.M."

Just nice swimsuit shots like Esther Williams in *Dangerous When Wet*, Sonya has promised.

Three o'clock. The sun has broken through; the sky is bluing up. Big patches of brownish-green seaweed have washed up on the beach during the rain. Moke and Sonya have cleared a spot far down the sand past the "Swim at Your Own Risk" sign. Moke has stopped off during the luncheon and picked up his Japanese 35-mm. camera, a Petri 1.9, from the deserted house. He busts open one of the yellow boxes of Kodachrome, breathing in its special celluloid fragrance, drops it in the camera and threads it carefully along the delicate sprockets within. He will pretend he is the great outdoor nude photographer, Andre DeDienes, and immortalize Sonya forever. Except Sonya is not totally nude in her turquoise bikini because there really isn't that much privacy and Hazel, who has heard of this photographic scheme, has given them stern warnings—no beavers, no tit shots, absolutely none, just nice swimsuit shots like Esther Williams in *Dangerous When Wet*. Sonya has promised.

Well, in her turquoise bikini, she is *almost* nude, and quite heartbreakingly beautiful enough. He takes her silhouetted against the sky. He takes her in the water, like a mermaid returning to her undersea kingdom, looking back seductively over her left shoulder. He takes her laughing on her hands and knees on the beach towel with the lovely arch of her back, where you would touch her to gently roll her over onto the terrycloth, and the cold ocean swelling unexpectedly around his groin could almost produce steam.

Already Moke anticipates the time when these slides will be the only tangible evidence that Sonya existed. He imagines himself back in his room at Duke, sad and alone at midnight with his slide projector, slowly flicking the advance mechanism and throwing glorious lifesize reproductions of Sonya onto the wall above his bed. . . . A sad, sad prospect.

Around five they stop in at the Elbow Room, an oceanfront bar and dance joint with a certain seedy intimacy all its own.

The waitress wants to know do they want any drinks—Sonya orders a pink lady and Moke orders a whiskey sour.

"Do you realize that we only have six more days down here?" Moke says.

"I'm going to miss you," Sonya says.

"What will your life be like when you go back?"

"Starting school—it should be fun enough. It's a little hard to imagine right now."

"I'm going to miss you too," Moke says. "How would you like an extra member of the family for a while? Just to keep an eye on you, I mean?"

"That wouldn't be like having a chaperone, would it?"

"Heavens no. I could just stay in your room, silly. It would be like having a roommate. Then when you came home from classes, I'd be there and we could study together."

"What *kind* of studying?"

"Whatever kind you liked."

"I'm afraid I wouldn't get much studying done with *you* in my bedroom, *mon cheri*."

"Sure you would, Sonya. You'd have to. I'd insist on it."

"What will your year be like at Duke University?"

"Terrible." Pause.

"You never know though, you know?" Sonya says. "It might not be so bad. How can you really tell?"

"Organic chemistry. No Sonya. Quantitative analysis. Advanced Calculus. Advanced German. And Comparative Anatomy?"

"I bet you'll be good in Comparative Anatomy. You have a real feel for it, baby."

"I'd rather be your roommate."

"Okay."

"Okay what?"

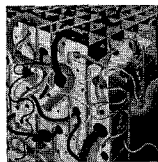
"Okay you can be my roommate!"

"You just bought yourself a roommate, kid. What will Hazel say?"

"She'll say. . . . We better not tell Hazel at all, I think. Just keep it between you and me."

"Fine." He touches her under the table. "That's just where it should be, right? As long as it's just between you and me, Sonya, everything's going to be all right."

"As long as it's between you and me. . . ." She gasps. "I'll give you just about fifteen minutes, Moke Galenaille, to cut that out."



"Hey, you wanna dance?" Someone has dropped some quarters into the jukebox, which starts clicking like

an automatic cement factory, and Sonya is already up and pulling him across the floor, ducking underneath these empty chianti bottles the management has hanging from the rafters to sharpen up the decor. Sonya's shirt is tied in rabbit's ears at the belly, but aside from that modest gesture, she is still wearing strictly beach attire, the bikini, her flip-flops (which she walks out of), and an anklet. The bar is practically deserted except for a booth with three American Legionnaire-types gumming stogies and a couple of tired half-drunk insurance salesmen. When Sonya moves across the room, their backs stiffen up like crows on a wire and conversation stops in mid-sentence.

Chubby Checker says:

Twist again like we did last summer

Twist again like we did last year

Do-you-re-mem-ber when. . .

and Sonya is doing it, doing it, saying, "Come on, *baby*," as Moke is backing away at a comfortable distance, mumbling apologies, excuses, suddenly meek and embarrassed and bumping into barstools. He can dance "Ebb Tide" all night long, but this kind of thing is something he has never even seen before, let alone learned how to do, and it looks to him distinctly like a bur-le-cue routine or what they used to call "dirty boogie." But Sonya looks as if she doesn't need a partner that awful-bad anyhow, the way she is getting into it. This girl just really loves to dance, Moke is thinking, just really lovves it, and somewhere along the line she figured out that it made every man within gawking distance into a helpless voyeur.

"Jesus," one of the insurance salesmen says to Moke, "where'd you ever get a chick like that? She your sister?"

"Nope," Moke says.

"She is sumpin else."

"Yeah, she sure is."

"What's at?"

"I said, '*yeah, she sure is.*'"

Sonya is gazing steadily at Moke as if there is no one else in the Elbow Room but the two of them. She unties the rabbit-ears at her midriff and lets the shirttails fly around loose a little while, then she wraps each tail around her body as far as she can, pantomiming distress that the material isn't generous enough to cover all the parts that modesty requires.

"Tsh-tsh," says the insurance salesman.

"Who *is* that girl?" the bartender says.

"She ain't my mother," says the insurance salesman.

"And she ain't *his* sister," he says, pointing at Moke.

Sonya takes off the shirt—which brings a round of applause from the Legionnaires' booth—and dances in a large semi-circle towards them, using the shirt as a cape to tantalize the poor idiots. "Oh, God," Moke is thinking, "how much did she have to drink, anyway?"

"She'd better watch herself," the bartender says. "We don't allow that kind of dancing in this place. We could get canned for something like that."

"Oh, she's just having a good time," says the insurance man. "Leave her alone, why don't ya, for cryin' out loud!" He grabs a handful of beer nuts and starts chomping away like a starved rat, rubbernecking back to Sonya with a look of adoration on his face.

"Take it *all* off, Baby, why doncha, huh?" says one of the Legionnaires, and the others clap in agreement.

"Ha-ha, fat chance of that!" says the insurance man, looking worriedly at the bartender. "My, she sure can dance though, can't she? She sure can."

When Moke looks again he sees that Sonya, in fact, has her hands placed seductively on the snaps of her bikini halter and is giving them the old "should I?" routine—force of habit, probably. He is starting to get into the mood of this little charade of hers himself. Why *not* liven up the local bistro a little bit on a rainy Sunday afternoon, for God's sake? These poor jokers have probably never seen such gorgeous flesh in their lives. You could look at it as a charitable act on Sonya's part really, letting a little light into the squalid lives of these sorry old boys. She is such a warm-hearted, loving person. She *enjoys* being beautiful, but that isn't going to make her a snob; she wants everyone else to enjoy it too. God, what a woman, Moke thinks.

Sonya suddenly peels off her halter—swish, lookee, lookee—does a fancy rotation that gives both the bar viewers and the Legionnaires' booth a choice perspective on her delectable breasts as they swing around in slow motion, and then minces over and deposits the tiny catty-cornered piece of polka-dotted nylon in the beer slops on the black tabletop under the Legionnaires' noses. They are so transfixed and breathless, they forget to clap for several seconds and then begin clapping and cheering simultaneously.

"Holy mother of God," says the insurance man. "This must be my day."

"All right, miss! All right, miss!" yells the bartender. "That's just about enough of that! Put that back on. Put that right back on this minute, you hear me?" He bulls his way out from behind the bar and rushes to the jukebox and jerks the cord out of the wall.

"Godammit to hell," says the insurance man.

"We don't run that kind of place here, miss. I can't permit this to continue," he says, shaking his head back and forth woefully. He looks a little like a bald Yogi Berra. Sonya is standing there with a hand on her hip and her halter strap hanging now from the pinkie of the other hand, making no move whatsoever to put on the halter (returned to her guiltily by one of the boys) and she has a surprisingly defiant, pouty expression on her face.

"God, there's always a killjoy in every crowd," says the insurance man. "You never get what you really want because somebody always comes along and ruins everything." The bartender is having a hard time approaching much closer than twenty feet to the suspect. He keeps looking as if he would like to shield his eyes with his forearm or run out the front door.

"Put it on or I'm calling the cops," he says in a loud voice. "I'm not putting up with some nutty slut coming in here and ruining my business."

Unbelievably, Sonya starts walking slowing towards him, sticking her tongue out and twirling the halter around like an airplane propeller.

"All right. That does it," says the bartender, hurrying back behind the bar. "I don't have to put up with this kind of crap!"

"Come on, Sonya, let's get out of here," Moke says.

"Hold it right there!" the bartender says. He pulls out a brown-handled Saturday Night Special from beneath the cash drawer and waves it around like some kind of cowboy.

"Come off it," Moke says. "You must be kidding."

"Name, address, and ID!" says the bartender. "Right now!—on the bar. And no more fucking around! You college kids think you can come in here and do anything you damn well please. Bunch of god-damned spoiled brat beatniks!"

"Just watch your language," says the insurance man. Moke gets out his wallet and carefully lays his father's American Express card, his driver's license, and his last year's University ID onto the black counter-top. Sonya pulls on her shirt and ambles toward the door, still unbuttoned up the front and the halter dangling over her left shoulder like a nice catch of fish.

"That girl can *dance*. Anybody can see that."

"Where's she think she's going?" yells the bartender.

"Better wait a minute, Sonya," Moke says.

"I'll wait in the car," she says.

"Hold it right there, miss!" screams the bartender.

"Go ahead and blow my head off," Sonya says, "if you think it'll make you *feel* any better, you faggoty creep!" She walks slowly on out the door, with a defiant swing of her hips.

"I'll have her busted for indecent exposure!" The bartender is purple. "I don't have to listen to that from some two-bit whore!"

"She got a little carried away," Moke says. "She's a professional dancer, sir, and maybe she had a little too much to drink this afternoon. She's been under a certain amount of strain lately, but she's a good girl—really, she's a very good girl—let's just calm down and put this thing in perspective."

"I'll *bet* she's a good girl," says the bartender, "Good for about twenty bucks on the hoof."

"I *knew* she was a professional the minute she got out there on the floor," says the insurance man. "I knew it instantly. That girl can *dance*. Anybody can see that."

The bartender is copying down every number on Moke's driver's license. "All right, what's *her* name?"

"Her name is Sonya Velonis. . . . She's from Canada, but she's visiting with us. . . . with my family, my parents and me. . . ."

"Spell it!"

"S-O-N-Y-A. . . V-E-L-O-N-I-S," Moke says.

When he finally gets out of the Elbow Room, big cumulus clouds are again blowing out over the water like huge lumbering dirigibles and the palm fronds are whipping this way and that with the hint of more rain. There is no sign of Sonya in the car. Moke scans the beachfront and picks her out finally, sitting down near the water, hugging her knees, staring out into the misty deep. He walks slowly toward her. □

CAROLYN MAISEL: TWO POEMS

1. Going North

She is the last animal leaving Eden. Her
final cry cracks glaciers. She has learned no
strategy but the eternal feminine, a land bridge
she crosses. She drifts all over the world
without understanding continents.

One by one the stars go South. She barely
has hold of her thesis, which is *beauty*
and *technology*. She merely rediscovers.
Everything from sidewalks to gravity,
the axle of reinvention grinds on.

She reinvents the barn. She would rather
sleep in a barn. She is having a drink
of whiskey with the farmer. They stand
by the cellar furnace. Outside snow
covers the farm like new paint. The dawn
is dark green and his overalls are striped.
The river of her sex is stirred. As she comes,
Dog-Headed Man stirs in his sleep.
Mother Volga knows no banks like these.

2. Falling to Grace

She has orgasms in her sleep, lilies
that toil not, bloom a day, and die. A garden
of flowers, think of Jeanne D'Arc that way, not
in a crowd of mutilated bodies, not
on a virginal pyre. Virginitude and martyrdom,
old tools of the church.

The desert is as passionate as a brothel
and as pure. The meaning of being *good*. Was it
St. Catherine the Astounding who leapt into wells
to avoid the stink of people? Pig Woman cannot stand
her own smell. It is death, it is truly bacterial.
It is pre-Christian. She wants to give up
her wasted soul. What is there really in the dry
stones of cathedrals, it must be all in the knees,
the knee, the site of religious feeling. What cold
warmth in those trillion candle prayers.

By knowing nothing at all she knows more
than her ancestors. She doesn't merely kneel,
she grovels. Nothing is too obscene.

BLIND ALLEY



Maurice Roche

*Thou shalt lose thy sleep as you lose your sight. While you're penetrating the darkness, you'll penetrate into the darkness, getting deeper and deeper; your already failing memory growing proportionally weaker as—at the end of a long lethargy—you become conscious of your condition.
(Now how will you distinguish between day and night?)*

You'll be there, on a bed—in a room, certainly. With your eyes wide open you'll scrutinize this dark desert and will the enlarging space allow you to go so far out that you can never return to your senses?

Inside your skull you'll be able to haunt Mnemopolis a lonesome and obscure city. No streets no canals no paving being done in the area (I'd define it as the circumvolutions of your brain), but only traces that you'll try to catch hold of: these will be shreds of memories (or hallucinations?) and sonorous debris that somehow reach you from outside and most of the time evoke absolutely nothing; so many objects or fragments that patiently—and not without hesitation—you'll want to string together—give them sense by connecting them—

in hopes of once more coming across that fissure where the sun has penetrated you with its shadow and forgetfulness has insinuated

*itself, infiltrated (and since when?), wakefulness invading your sleep, until your mind is submerged;
so you can sneak into this hole in your dazzled memory, first in search of a name (which?) whose sinuosities you'd marry. . . in order to become one in body with the calligraphy:*

*then finally
grow drowsy in this word. . . and sleep—rest in peace—sleep as far gone as possible.*

But you will not sleep.

With the help of your elbows and forearms—will you feel those cracks in your articulations, and will you hear them as you hear the creaking mattress?—you'll painfully (straining to twist yourself around) sit up; throwing your legs out from under the covers, you'll simultaneously attempt a rotation toward the right, at the end of which you should be sitting on the edge of the bed. But despite your efforts, you won't succeed.

*After a second try, then a third—having lightly rocked back and forth, you'll fall backward
and will stay half-stretched out, resting on your elbows, your hands clenching the covers, your legs slightly bent, panting. . .*

Without moving a muscle, chin jammed against your chest, you'll slowly regain your breath: your respiration, quickened at first, will become regular.

MAURICE ROCHE is a member of the 'Tel Quel' group; the selection here is from his novel Compact (Editions de Seuil, 1966). MARK A. POLIZZOTTI has been living in Paris.

Your look deserted. An entire past inexplicable at present. You'll wait for this absence with gaping, empty eyes. . . (how will you know if someone if anyone in this room which gets larger and larger? will it frighten you to be alone?)

*You'll slowly
turn your head*

*to the left to the right
before letting your neck fall back on the damp pillow, the frozen touch of the pillow-case will make you shiver. You'll touch your face, slowly you'll feel it (that's a presence!); and that object (which?) that—stretching out your arm—you'll knock over the bedside table on your right, while leaving the nocturnal landscape unchanged.*

*You'll curl up. . .
. . . like a sleeping dog (on the watch?). . . .*

And then you'll abandon this open night for a closed one : softly—you'll pull it toward you, you'll attract it to you—you'll lower your eyelids to reduce it to a small night that belongs to you (where you'll take refuge hoping to retrieve the memory of , and the trail of a day-dream that came to trouble the endless shadow. . .). With closed eyes you'll persist in compressing the darkness; with all your might, face in hands palms cupped over eye-sockets. . .

. . . cause an entopic glow, some sort of rip : vanishing point in the blackness. Your entire being concentrated, gathered in this movement, you'll compress your eyes and thus One awakens—thinking “an interesting nightmare, let's open our eyes!” one awakens.

In what place resembling the one of the night before the day after from which one has come (from which one has come to)?

“ . . . where the cross-breeding of microbes gives rise to a selection of rot. The illnesses are mixed together and consequently the pains intermingle. . .

“one doesn't suffer suffering. . . .”

One sweats, bathing motionless in a medley of odors. From the mustiness come slowly the sweetish fragrances

of the tiare the bland smells of the copra heady stomach-turning etc. . . .

One knows all this from reading it in certain brochures or in travel-guides or pamphlets which are popping up just about everywhere. One owns a few, in fact, inherited from a globe-trotting uncle who died in a Siberian salt-mine. One recalls the beginning of the vade-mecum for the Windward Islands, carefully prepared by that wonderful traveler. One has copied the details over in ca
BETWEEN 17° 19' 30'' AND 17° 47' SOUTH
LATITUDE—151° 29' 53'' AND 151° 56' LONGITUDE, TAHITI STRETCHES OVER 257,000 SURFACE ACRES. . .

pital letters on one of the bedroom walls (a bit higher than the night table, behind the bedside lamp) under the map of Papeete. One has, in fact, wallpapered the room—this room which takes the place of everything—with maps of cities.

One can approach these maps:

(they all have the same format; the cities, whatever their relative importance, are all the same size here—their point in common being the bedroom at

Papeete, for example, in damp Oceania. Here one no longer suffers, it's almost hopeless. One has consulted the Baedeker : “Hopeless.”)

this point marked by a cross in red pencil at this crossing. One is there. It's there that one stands. That one can be. In this city on this city held to the wall by four thumbtacks. Here at this crossing marked by a red X.

One puts one's finger on it, and this movement is enough to transport one to the same place where one is. . .

. . . where one has come to awaken. The room is bathed in darkness. Nonetheless, one guesses the exact location of each object in it, for one knows the place perfectly. But one feels the night like a vise.

One believes this room to be far away, and it's another that blows itself out of proportion.

Then one slowly takes a walk on one's fingertips : leaving from the corner of Rue Commandant Destremeau and Avenue Bruat, one arrives at Rue de Rivoli and crosses Avenue du Gouvernement. One passes in front of the cathedral and walks by the facade. One hesitates, having arrived at the front gate. One enters.

(Translated, from the French, by Mark A. Polizzotti)

Race and IQ, Jensen II, Déjà Vu

Bias in Mental Testing, by Arthur R. Jensen. Free Press.
\$29.95

Concerned with protecting the faith and unable to cope with Diderot's arguments against the existence of God, Catherine the Great turned to the great mathematician, Euler, to do so. After some reflection and preparation, Euler approached Diderot in open court and addressed him in the following vein: "Sir, $Z = X^2 + 2Y$. Hence, God exists! Reply!" Ignorant of mathematics, Diderot was unable to contend with this argument. Faith in the existence of God was preserved.

Arthur Jensen has adopted Euler's strategy in an attempt to preserve faith in the reality of inherited racial differences in intelligence. But this is not the original Jensen arguing directly for the genetic determination of IQ. This is a second edition of the argument, which makes direct reference to heredity only briefly. Thus it avoids those points in his earlier work which drew the most vigorous criticism from geneticists. This time Jensen assures us that he is abjuring any causal attribution but is simply marshalling the evidence which will conclusively demonstrate that IQ tests do measure intelligence, that those tests are not biased, that there are substantial racial differences in IQ, and that these differences cannot be attributed to cultural factors. If the reader infers that the only remaining implication is inheritance, that is presumably the reader's responsibility. All of the arguments rest on very sophisticated statistical analyses. Since there is controversy over that statistical methodology among professionals in the field, it is difficult to imagine readers lacking a professional level of competency in psychometrics who could penetrate the formulas to ask the appropriate questions. Thus even a reviewer with impeccable credentials, Stephen Jay Gould, reviewing for the *New York Review of Books*, while damning the book on both substantive and strategic grounds, ceded the technical ground to Jensen.

For whom is the book written? I have no answer. It received major coverage in *Time* and *Newsweek* months before copies were available to the scientific community. It has been reviewed in the daily press and was the subject of a *Donahue Show* on television. Certainly the publisher's publicity drive has been to a general public. Moreover, complex as the statistical material may be, the text assumes very little, develops necessary statistical concepts as needed, and provides the secondary assistance of rather copious didactic notes. Yet the central theme of the book gets into some very technical questions. It seems a bit much to expect a mathematically naïve reader to work through an *ad hoc* course in statistics and psychometrics in order to grasp the material. For the mathematically adept it would at least require considerable motivation. For a perspective on this, one should recall that the Kinsey report was promoted into best seller status despite the fact that it was largely statistical in nature. We still don't know whether that work was widely read or only widely sold.

Is the book intended by the author for an audience of peers? Again the answer is equivocal. Much of the material in chapters 9, 10, and 11, which constitute the core of the book, is presented in the same manner that it has been or would be presented in the scientific journals. On the other hand, much of the material leading up to that point is not necessary to the development of the arguments for a peer audience and would not be acceptable to professional journals.

Perhaps then, *Bias in Mental Testing* should be viewed as an apologia addressed to anyone who will listen. The lack of focus may partly explain why, despite almost 800 pages and an immense bibliography, this manages not to be a definitive work.

In a very real sense scholarly weakness was foretold by the fact of coverage in *Time* and *Newsweek*. The world was told what the book presumably proved months before the book was available to the scientific community. Yet, the scholarly world expects conclusions will not be promulgated until the work on which they are based is available for peer examination and criticism. Scholarly standards are shaded with Jensen's opening review of criticisms which have been made of tests. We are told what some of those criticisms are, but in large part we are not told who made them. The reader thus has no way of knowing whether a given criticism is a straw man or genuine. If the latter, he has no way of examining the original criticism to ascertain whether it has indeed been answered.

The review of legal cases on testing and on affirmative action again is not definitive. The issues that have been defined with precision in the law are not precisely presented nor is it made evident where the issues of law are yet to be clarified. Rather, Jensen states that the law implies that abilities are equally distributed in groups. Recently a court injunction (Larry P v. Wilson Riles, 48LW2298 (1979)) forbade use of an IQ test to assign children to classrooms for the mentally retarded. The usage resulted in a disproportionate number of blacks being assigned to such classes. From Jensen's review one would conclude such court decisions are based on a judge's assumption that abilities are equally distributed among blacks and whites. The reader is not told that an important factor in such decisions also is the legal responsibility of the school for providing the most appropriate education for the child. Schools must put children in the classes where they can best learn. If use of IQ tests results in putting mostly blacks in mentally retarded classrooms then the burden of proof is on the schools to prove that IQ tests show which black children will be best educated by being placed in mentally retarded classrooms. The case law is not built on an assumption of equality of distribution of abilities; it is built on a requirement of equality of effectiveness of educational placement.

Unhappily, the general reader is not equipped to evaluate the adequacy of scientific literature review or interpretation. There is enough concern in the scientific community to justify a forthcoming multiple review-

critique in *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. There, for example, Professor Jerry Hirsch, a past President of the Animal Behavior Society, together with his students, points out Jensen's "gross misunderstanding" of evolution as well as identifying some major sources not cited, including my own work. In short, among those with specific expertise in the topics covered there are specific and substantial scientific criticisms.

Even if the overall development is flawed, what of the central thesis of the book? Does the scientific evidence show that IQ tests measure intelligence, that the tests are unbiased, that there are racial differences, and that these differences cannot be attributed to culture? The last two questions are meaningless if the first two cannot be affirmed. This brings us to the heart of the book.

Crucial both to Jensen's position and to his statistics is a concept of "general intelligence." This theoretical view holds that all intellectual processes depend most on a single ability (general intelligence) possessed by everyone in greater or lesser degree. It is the idea that only a single ability is involved that permits referring to one person as being more or less intelligent than another. The reader is not informed that other interpretations exist, such as a widely held theoretical alternative that intelligence consists of many abilities, e.g. verbal reasoning, mathematical reasoning. The concept of general intelligence originated at the turn of the century in the work of Charles Spearman. It arose from a statistical technique he developed—factor analysis. He concluded that the mathematical relationships between scores of many people on many tests could be explained in terms of a single underlying factor which he labelled *g*. Jensen explicitly defines intelligence as *g*. However, factor analysis is a kind of statistical technique which can suggest, but is not evidence of anything. Quite literally what factor analysis does is to represent data with a mathematical model which is conceived as being plotted in space. Think of that plot as a sculpture. A draftsman's drawing would provide three different perspectives—front, side and top. The draftsman's perspectives are chosen purely by convention. One can either turn the sculpture or walk around it for an infinite number of possible perspectives. This is all that factor analysis does. It "rotates" (this is the exact mathematical term) the sculpture to see if one can find a perspective which seems more meaningful in the eyes of the beholder.

The problem is that the draftsman may find his customary conventions of top, front or side most meaningful—while an artist may choose some very different oblique perspective. In early days of factor analysis the choice of perspective often was made visually. The advent of the computer has encouraged use of conventions of which a number have been proposed. Spearman's *g* is the result if we choose the perspective using one of these conventions. That convention calls for the perspective from which the data plot looks the longest. That we can view every sculpture in terms of its longest dimension in no way proves that the length of sculptures is the most basic universal characteristic even of the physical structure of sculptures. A similar example is the description of the size of television screens. One can describe in terms of width and height. Manufacturers however prefer another perspective for advertising purposes. They rotate the screen (or their measuring sticks) to measure along the

longest dimension—the diagonal. One could think of the diagonal measure as the *g* of screen size—a single measure. On the other hand others might find more meaning in a perspective using the height and width—two measures. The choice of factor analytic perspectives is based on conventions or aesthetics, and there are no universally agreed upon standards for either. Factor analysis is not a method of empirical proof but only a technique for seeking new perspectives that may suggest new insights. The definition and thus the arguments for a concept of general intelligence derive solely from one possible perspective in factor analysis. Many psychologists find a different perspective with multiple abilities a more meaningful view of man.

Turning to the question of bias, the explicit topic of the book, the arguments become technical. Bias is defined in Chapter 9. It has a precise technical meaning in the field of testing. Bias is a systematic error in the test results. In psychometric language there may be bias in predictive validity or in construct validity. These relate respectively to certain kinds of errors resulting from use of a test and to certain theoretical and empirical aspects of the internal structure of a test. This is the very core of the central topic of the book and the one demanding the most technical expertise. The supporting statistical didactics are not sufficient to enable critical reading of these sections. If the definitions of bias fail, then analysis of bias based on those definitions must also fail. I have identified failures in definition in both predictive and construct validity in a technical review for *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*; the most I can do here is outline the nature of those failures.

While we do speak of the "validity of a test," this is an imprecise use of language. Validity is not in fact a property of a test. Rather it is a characteristic of the use of the test. The most well designed test of knowledge of Shakespearean drama will have no validity for selection of an Olympic skating team. Predictive validity refers to how well the test works in use. For example, one might wish to devise a test to select for special training those children with most potential to become Olympic skating champions. This is the predictor test. The predictive validity would be a statistical measure of how well the test predicted winning an Olympic championship. Performance in Olympic competition would be the "criterion." Practically, in developing the predictor test there would not be a sufficient number of tested individuals competing in the Olympics to enable assessment of the validity of the test. For most tests, it is usually impractical or impossible to assess validity directly against the criterion.

As a substitute for the Olympics one might assess validity by comparing predictor test results with performance at national competitions. Nationals are not Olympics and thus are not a perfect criterion test; accordingly, assessment of validity would be affected not only by those imperfections or errors of the predictor test which truly reduce validity but also by the fact that nationals are not a perfect index of Olympic performance. There is a statistical adjustment somewhat misnamed "correction for attenuation" which can be used to *estimate* what the validity would be if the nationals were not an imperfect criterion test. This "correction" is applied to statistics of the criterion test. The underlying logic is to replace the actual

criterion test results with hypothetical results of a hypothetical perfect criterion test. Jensen's technical definition of bias in predictive validity is bias in a predictor test after it has been corrected for attenuation. His usage replaces the predictor test, not the criterion test, with a hypothetical errorless test. Warnings against this complete misuse of this statistical adjustment can be found in many standard psychometric textbooks. Assessment of validity may involve a hypothetical criterion because it may be inaccessible to measurement. But, validity always refers to a real predictor test. Under Jensen's definition a test is predictively biased only if a hypothetical errorless predictor test is biased. Ridiculous! The issue of bias is an issue of real tests in a real world.

Turning to construct validity, at a very technical level in psychometrics it can be shown that a test is biased if, and only if, there are certain statistical characteristics associated with the internal structure of the test. The best known example was early known as the "chitlins" test, later as the BITCH (Black Intelligence Test Counterbalanced for Homogeneity) test. This is a set of ghetto-relevant questions which most middle class whites cannot answer. It demonstrates that it is possible to find questions easy for blacks but difficult for whites just as there are questions easy for whites but difficult for blacks. The essential characteristic of bias is that the relative difficulty of questions, called *items* by psychometricians, differs for different groups. Group related variations in item difficulty are known as group by item interactions. The statistical term "interaction" refers to joint effects of two or more factors, in this case race and question difficulty, which differ from what one would expect from knowledge of effects of the factors taken alone. The term has become more broadly known in recent years because of its use in studies of joint action of two or more drugs.

Though perhaps not evident to the nonprofessional, interaction gets to the single ultimate touchstone for bias. Jensen proposes a new statistical index for evaluating bias—the Group Differences by Interaction Ratio GD/I. In a statistical technique known as the analysis of variance there is a standard statistical measure which can be used to measure the magnitude of group (racial) differences. A similar standard measure shows the magnitude of the group by item interaction. Dividing the former by the

latter yields the GD/I ratio. This does go directly to the essence of bias, but the index and its use reflect the weakness of Jensen's argument.

Jensen interprets a large GD/I ratio as evidence against bias. Such a result shows that the observed magnitude of the differences between racial groups is greater than the observed magnitude of joint interaction effects of race and choice of question. Jensen assumes that if the measured overall difference between races is greater than the measured effects of question selection then bias is either nonexistent or trivial. This is faulty reasoning. It assumes that evidence that a test is unbiased can be found solely within the test itself. But for a test to be unbiased, it must not be subject to bias in selection of questions. This can occur only if choice of question makes no difference with respect to race, or if there is no bias in choice of questions. The choice process involves both selection and exclusion. This, of course, is the point made by the "chitlins" test. Examination of performance on questions selected reveals nothing about performance on questions excluded. Comparison of both is necessary to evaluation of bias based in the choice of questions.

How can one summarize this book as a whole? In some respects the tenor of the entire work can be characterized by comparing the treatment of racial difference with the treatment of sex differences. With respect to race Jensen interprets differences in IQ scores as evidence of differences in intelligence. He concludes, however, there are no sex differences in intelligence. With respect to sex he notes it has long been known that boys do better on some kinds of questions and girls on others. Thus choice of questions can affect which will score higher on a test. Therefore, questions or scoring methods for IQ tests are chosen to balance out these differences. Thus he interprets racial differences in test scores as evidence of differences of intelligence while he interprets sex differences in test scores as evidence of need for changes in the content of the test. Moreover, after indicating that tests are structured to eliminate sex differences he uses the absence of sex differences on IQ tests as evidence that there are no sex differences in intelligence. Such inconsistency is not reassuring. Such logic is not compelling.

—Gordon M. Harrington

John Updike's America

As a full time professional, John Updike has been writing in America since 1954, the year he graduated from Harvard and sold his first short story to *The New Yorker* magazine. His quarter-century tenure as a literary artist is remarkable not only for its artistic success, but for the fact that such a vocation is still financially possible—in Updike's case, by virtue of a reliably supportive publisher and ready magazine market. As fellow novelist Joseph Heller had to remind students (in *Paris Review* #60, Winter 1974, p. 127) in the prime of his own commercial popularity, "even if

every word a writer writes is published, he will almost surely have to supplement his income, usually by teaching, or perhaps by marrying money." John Updike is one of the very few artistically important writers in America today who has been forced to rely on neither of Heller's options. The business of writing fiction is his very life.

Living and writing in America has formed the substance of Updike's published work. The great majority of his nine novels and six short story collections published in hardcover to date take for their subjects the lives of

relatively average people: kids growing up in small towns with ambitions of moving to the big city, young married couples finding their first small apartments and jobs, maturing men and women enjoying relative affluence in the suburbs and (as the quarter-century ripens) going through separation, divorce and remarriage. For Updike the scheme is vaguely autobiographical, and although to keep things mundane he almost always makes his protagonist's job something other than being a writer, the self-consciously artistic language of these fictions more than

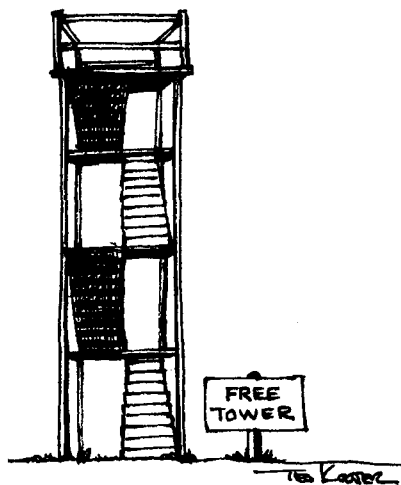
compensates for the business-like action described. Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom of *Rabbit, Run* and *Rabbit Redux* is a typesetter, and most of the boys in Updike's stories who have hopes of becoming great artists grow up to find themselves commercial illustrators, animators, or photographers. But the language in which Updike characterizes their thoughts and behavior, and the way he arranges and rearranges their stories—all bespeak a self-conscious artistry. Their lives, it seems, are Updike's own life of fiction.

* * *

Best known as a regular *New Yorker* contributor, most highly honored for his novel *The Centaur* (National Book Award for Fiction at home, *Le prix du meilleur livre étranger* in France), and most popular with the reading public for his novels *Rabbit, Run* and *Couples*, Updike frequently reflects on his own work in ways that offer several clues to his method as a writer. His first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair* (1959), was written in 1957 as a visionary statement of American life as it might be two decades later; two subsequent editions (1964 and 1977) have contained new and revealing forewords by the author, reflecting how America's ongoing history has variously confirmed or contradicted his suspicions. *Rabbit, Run* (1960) had its sequel eleven years later in *Rabbit Redux*. A brief memoir, "The Dogwood Tree: A Boyhood" (1962), was preserved in Updike's first collection of nonfiction, *Assorted Prose* (1965). And in 1969 the author thought back on what he hoped would be no less than the first half of his life in the long poem, *Midpoint*. Memoir and poem are rich with biographical correspondences, inviting readers to assemble an American middle class saga from his fifteen books of fiction. But the best reharvesting of this work has been done by Updike himself, in two paperback originals which reprint, rearrange, and reintroduce short stories from his six hardcover collections and sheaf of uncollected work: *Olinger Stories* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964) and *Too Far To Go: The Maples Stories* (New York: Fawcett, 1979).

"Olinger" is the name Updike invents for the fictional town which vaguely corresponds to his birthplace, Shillington, Pennsylvania, where he spent a self-admittedly sheltered boyhood in the 1930s and

'40s. Like William Faulkner's mythical Yoknapatawpha, Olinger's ecology, sociology, and demographics conform closely enough to the author's own home grounds to satisfy readers who demand a "real life story," yet allow enough latitude for the writer's essentially imaginative work. "The Maples," Richard and Joan, are a fictional couple Updike wrote about from 1955 through 1976. Their biographical match-ups with the Olinger stories and with the Updikes' own marriage (1953-1976) are numerous, although Richard comes from a town just across the nearby West Virginia border (where Rabbit Angstrom, fleeing a place very much like Olinger and its neighboring city, met a dead end in a murky lovers' lane). Even closer are the comparisons these Maples stories invite with Updike's treatment of American married life in his later novels, just as Olinger serves as a background for



most of the earlier ones. By Updike's own choice *Olinger Stories* and *Too Far To Go* have become the center of his fictional and visionary world.

At the heart of these two books, in turn, stands Updike's most important and most characteristic story, "Pigeon Feathers." First published in *The New Yorker* for August 19, 1961, it gave its name to Updike's widely praised collection the next year, was made the centerpiece of *Olinger Stories* (from which edition the following quotations come); and by reference to theme and technique it provides the informing principle of nearly all the Maples stories gathered up in 1979. In "Pigeon Feathers" Updike creates David Kern, a 14-year-old protagonist with a boyhood somewhat like his own, whose family's

ten-mile move from town out into the country causes things to be "upset, displaced, rearranged" (p. 19). In the Foreword to *Olinger Stories*, Updike remarks how "This strange distance, this less than total remove from my milieu, is for all I know the crucial detachment of my life" (p. ix). Physical separation is the boy's first problem; cut off from school friends, town life, and familiar surroundings, he finds himself isolated as never before. But Updike's story leads to stirrings of a deeper alienation. Rum-maging through his mother's dusty college books, David chances upon H.G. Wells' *Outline of History* and reads that author's account of Jesus, of how "he had been an obscure political agitator, a kind of hobo, in a minor colony of the Roman Empire" (p. 21). The boy, though never a religious zealot, is at once distanced from the familiar emotional center of his life. Characteristically, Updike frames this loss in carefully shaped language: "It was as if a stone that for weeks and even years had been gathering weight in the web of David's nerves snapped them and plunged through the page and a hundred layers of paper underneath" (pp. 21-22). It is not the thoughts (in a conventionally religious sense) but rather the simple existence of such a book which, "if true, collapsed everything into a jumble of horror" (p. 22). Far more than a challenge of faith, Wells' book has prompted in David "an exact vision of death: a long hole in the ground, no wider than your body, down into which you are drawn while the white faces above recede." The threat is nothing less than "extinction," which Updike phrases in visionary terms: "a tide of clay had swept up to the stars; space was crushed into a mass" (p. 26).

Shaken loose from the familiar beliefs of his childhood, in themselves little more than comfortable habits, David reevaluates the texts of his life. Dictionaries, the Bible, sermons and Sunday school instructions—all are catastrophically dismissed. "He hated everything about them but the promise they held out, a promise that in the most perverse way, as if the homeliest crone in the kingdom were given the Prince's hand, made every good and real thing, ball games and pert-breasted girls, possible" (p. 37). Like Harry Angstrom in *Rabbit, Run*, David cannot find adequate words to counter this vision—not from his

mother, not from his minister, not from any of the conventional sources upon whom one is supposed to rely. All he has are "dread" and "fear" (pp. 42, 43), the key terms from Updike's reading of Kierkegaard. And so David, who is created in turn by Updike's language, fashions a new world of values from natural details: the subtle radiance of barnlight, the smell of old straw, the "ragged infinity" of the natural world in which even the feathers of pigeons, nuisance birds he slaughters at will, are marvels of creation. As David buries these birds he is "robed in this certainty: that the God who had lavished such craft upon these worthless birds would not destroy His whole Creation by refusing to let David live forever" (p. 50).

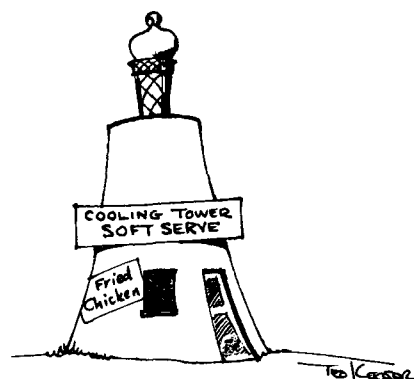
This consistent scheme of narrative repeats itself throughout the selections from *Olinger Stories*. A young, sensitive protagonist is by spatial displacement led into a re-ordering of personal judgment. Particular details have first prompted a longing for the universal ("above the particulars the immense tinted pity, the waste, of being at one little place instead of everywhere, at every time," p. 5). That longing ultimately leads to the question of physical death. But death's vision is countered by more details—not necessarily transcendent in Christian fashion, but celebrated nonetheless as transcriptions of a creator's art. By the volume's end the narrative spokesman, now grown to resemble the real John Updike in the most personal of details, thinks of this celebratory technique as part of his own writer's art, of every little squib of life "all set sequentially down with the bald simplicity of intrinsic blessing, thousands and thousands of pages; ec-statically uneventful; divinely and defiantly dull" (p. 137).

The endings of both "Pigeon Feathers" and the fragment quoted above, "The Blessed Man of Boston," confirm Updike's moral stated in the volume's Foreword: "*We are rewarded unexpectedly*" (p. vii). Of course David will not live forever; nor would any such manically unselective book be a useful work of art. But Updike is in full control of each self-conscious irony, for the boy's and the author's innocent intentions have successfully challenged death. A relish for detail helps, for as another fragment states, "we have no ges-

tures adequate to answer the imperious gestures of nature" (p. 140); transitory as we are, we must improvise with what we have. By assembling a catalogue of existence Updike locates what he calls the "thin point" of "piercing survival" (pp. 147-148). "Details are the giant's fingers" (p. 153), these stories tell us. Or, as one of Updike's rare writer-narrators answers when asked the point of all he has written, "We in America need ceremonies" (p. 185).

* * *

We are rewarded unexpectedly. Fifteen years later this moral and motto is transformed, in the pages of *Too Far To Go*, as "all blessings are mixed" (p. 10). Within those fifteen years of American life can be found the aftermath of President John F. Kennedy's "Camelot," the experiences of Vietnam and Watergate, and then another half-decade of change in world economics. The very first stories are brought back from the even earlier years of Eisenhower's presi-



dency and Kennedy's thousand days; every one of the seventeen stories and fragments re-collected here is stamped by its evolving historical time. But once more Updike's personal scheme of things and his own sense of language are the collection's true subjects. The three stage narrative structure of the individual Olinger pieces (initial sensitivity / challenge by rearrangement / triumph over death) is reflected in many of the Maples stories, and the second volume is reassembled and chronologically arranged just like the first. The initial stories of *Too Far To Go* overlap in matters of character, theme, and biographical reference with the fragments near the end of *Olinger Stories*, and with the little correspondences to Updike's own life (such as makes of cars, personal habits, and even home addresses). The

volumes are indeed companions, and just as Updike told an interviewer in 1968 (the comments are reprinted in his *Picked-Up Pieces*, p. 498) that "if I had to give anybody one book of me it would be the Vintage *Olinger Stories*," so his similar creation of a new work from the Maples stories makes *Too Far To Go* a good clue to his manner and methods of more recent years.

A typical Maples story will, like an Olinger piece, begin with a reference to or demonstration of the protagonist's sensitivity. But with ripening age and a deteriorating marriage there comes a change in attitude, for Richard Maples's aesthetic judgments are sometimes wasted on frivolous or farcical details: a supermarket cabbage, overwrought art, or tasteless racial parodies. The narrative scheme of sensitivity, challenge, and triumph becomes at times more heavily ironic, especially when the references to *Olinger Stories* are kept in mind. At the book's end, when the Maples are in court for their no-fault divorce, the presiding judge is noted to have "a polished pink face" which "declared that he was altogether good, and would never die" (p. 255)—a sad diminishing of David Kern's illusion of triumph at the end of "Pigeon Feathers." At one point Richard becomes a victim of his creative memory, letting his imagination sentimentally rewrite the history of his marriage and then sealing it with a kiss. Throughout *Too Far To Go* details of American life are less sublimely celebratory and more sardonically diminished. The promise of a sheltered boyhood—of anyone's boyhood, Updike seems to say—is not fulfilled by an unlimited future of blessed moments. All blessings, our older American man of 1979 reports, are mixed.

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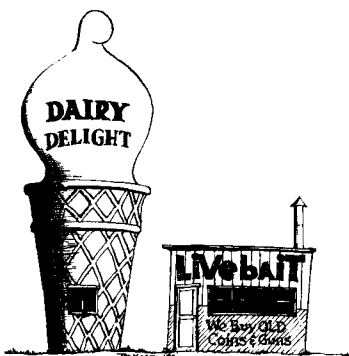
If *Olinger Stories* explains much of what goes on in Updike's early novels, *Too Far To Go* helps one understand his major works which followed *The Centaur* (1963) and his transitional novel *Of the Farm* (1965). The fate of married men and women in America is of course central to his novel *Couples* (1968); but even *Rabbit Redux* (1971) and *A Month of Sundays* (1975) are more heavily dependent upon the subject of sexual relations than the sense of shelter (and more rarified aesthetic longing) so integral to the earlier books. And with *Marry Me* (1976) and the closing stories of

Problems (1979) Updike begins what may be the next saga in his fiction: remarriage. Yet the seeds of his full-grown interest in marriage and divorce predate even the first Olinger novel, *The Poorhouse Fair* (1959). The earliest of the Maples stories, "Snowing in Greenwich Village," appeared in *The New Yorker* on January 21, 1956, with the Maples (and the Updikes) not yet two years married; but already outside interests are in the air, as figured by the attractively threatening character named Rebecca. By the fourth story, "Twin Beds in Rome" (February 8, 1964), Richard and Joan are already discussing separation; and even in the two stories in between, Updike's narrator is regretting that "Once my ornate words wooed you" (p. 34) and acknowledging that "Romance is, simply, the strange, the untried" (p. 54).

The strange and the untried are Updike's new variation on the rearrangement scheme of *Olinger Stories*, for which an eager and heightened sensuousity is the perfect tool. Joan Maple is challenged by a need to redefine her identity—"housewife" must be replaced by some more dignifying role and name for it—but Richard is the true slave of words. "Mistress," "nakedness," and the like haunt him, all the more so because his childhood's America has become "this nation of temporary arrangements" (p. 228) which nevertheless lacks institutions and even gestures to accommodate his plainly sensuous interest in any woman not his wife. Divorce is regretted, and is in fact experienced as a death for him and for Joan, because happy marriage is a myth his childhood taught him. His and Joan's gesturings as they vacillate between divorce and reconciliation are meaningfully pathetic, for as fraudulent as their relationship has become, it is the only thing they really have. "He saw through her words to what she was saying," a narrator sympathetic to Richard notes, "—that these lovers, however we love them, are not us, are not sacred as reality is sacred. We are reality. We have made children. We gave each other our young bodies. We promised to grow old together" (p. 231). Though the marriage crumbles, "her gestures would endure, cut into glass" (p. 231), an image which Updike's own respect for fine creation (reestablished by careful imagery ear-

lier in this same story) leads the reader to accept as sincere.

The larger structure of *Too Far To Go* eclipses its obvious history and is formed instead by the patterns of Richard and Joan's language: words which alternately tear them apart and knit them together as they discuss their marriage. Once more, despite the sometimes contradictory hints of a larger plan for life, carefully noted details are the most one can have, and Updike is the master of those details. In 1960 Rabbit had worried that his life amounted to no more than the tacky particulars of his shabby life, and so tried to compensate by creating a life of superior aesthetics (harking back to the successful creative plan of his high school basketball career). In 1971 (the year of *Rabbit Redux*) one of Updike's stories later transposed into the voice of Richard Maple finds the narrator shuffling about the house his family has just vacated for another and feeling guilty "that we occupied it so thinly," that although the 300-year-old colonial



home has offered archaeological treasures from America's past, "Of ourselves, a few plastic practice golfballs in the iris and a few dusty little Superballs beneath the radiators will be all for others to find" (pp. 147, 148). Like so many of the Olinger stories, this Maples episode ends with a moral: "All around us, we are outlasted" (p. 154). Natural details, elevating and enriching in the boyhoods of *Olinger Stories*, no longer do their job so rewardingly; by necessity, they have been replaced with the intimate details of a twenty-year marriage. These shared associations have bred a private language, and when the relationship ends the language and composite details do not disappear. Remarriage is a new lease on creative life, but it is not a simple and entire rebirth, as the inconclusive turmoils shown among the couples of

Marry Me make clear. As the last story of *Problems* more confidently concludes, experiences from a previous marriage form a lost Atlantis of stored memories, a part of one's self, once shared, which is now submerged but still really there. And though harder to reach, they are no less persistent, no less valuable.

* * *

"Life goes on; stray strands are tucked back," Updike wrote in his "Introduction to the 1977 Edition" of his first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair*. He maintains this optimism despite his younger writer's pessimism that "All is flux; nothing lastingly matters" (p. xix). For John Updike, of contemporary America's writers probably the one most deeply read in theology and religion, the details of existence are the makings for a love-hate relationship with the world. Death and immortality have been the contrary roles of his writing career. But against the conventional wisdom of what he calls the death-oriented futurism in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* and George Orwell's *1984*, Updike declares his visionary faith in the creative powers of language—his characters', and his own. In the second of his Maples stories, a piece first published in 1960 during the high promise of a still-young Maples marriage, a narrator finds words in James Joyce's *Ulysses* to woo his wife:

Smackwarm. That was the crucial word. Smacked smackwarm on her smackable warm woman's thigh. Something like that. A splendid man, to feel that. Smackwarm woman's. Splendid also to feel the curious and potent, inexplicable and irrefutably magical life language leads within itself. (p. 30)

Seventeen years later a poetic voice vaguely but in a deliberately suggestively way resembling Richard Maple's dedicates a book titled *Tossing and Turning* (1977) to a woman soon to become his second wife:

*When first he saw. Alas!
Full tup. Full throb.
Warbling. Ah, lure! Alluring.
Martha! Come!
Clapclap. Clipclap. Clappyclap.*
—*Ulysses*

Words have been the saga in John Updike's life of fiction. And the words of any day's creation, unlike their fleshy promise, are never eclipsed or effaced.

—Jerome Klinkowitz

HIGH-ROLLING FRENZY GRIPS H'WOOD

—Banner Headline, *Variety*
8/22/79

CRASH—BAM—BOOM—THUD . . . As little as 11 months ago that headline appeared. "15 Mil Budgets Common, Some Climbing As High As \$30-40 Mil Negative Cost," is how the article was slugged. And the lead sentence—"In an ominous trend . . ."—referred to the fact that in 1970, 10 years earlier, the BIG pictures were routinely beginning to cost in the numbers of millions of dollars, (and 10 years before that 1 million was high budget). Then, suddenly in 1970, something happened and nobody was going to see them; the losses to the studios were catastrophic, there were retrenchments . . . the old winds of fear!

"Main difference between current events and situation at the end of the 1960s is that the film business lately *has been very healthy*, with major companies regularly posting impressive profits, *whereas many companies were experiencing astronomical losses and massive write-downs 10 years ago.*" (Italics mine)

As little as 11 months ago, mind you, the above paragraph was printed, and then in January *Variety* announced that '79 had been the all-time U.S. box office record. But, *suddenly something happened*. In April the box office was down! With the exception of "The Empire Strikes Back," the blockbusters released for the summer attendance trade played to poorer business. Now *Variety* reports the summer is off 5 %, which, taking out the 8% ticket inflation of the last 8 months, means a real drop of 13-14%.

In the Black Tower, the corporate headquarters of Universal Pictures—the big producer for both features and TV—the wind of fear blows down the corridors. Their "Blues Brothers," a 30 million dollar epic, is a bomb. Also there're hassles going on about how much the series are costing and how much the producers are getting paid by the networks. And there's the competition with the cable systems which are proliferating, offering pictures that are only a couple of months old. (Why not wait

The Price of Big: Too Much Is Only Too Much

until you can see it at home?) If this isn't enough there's the matter of a recession in the economy. (And, it costing the average couple around \$20 just to see a movie, you still want to go out?)

It used to be said that the movie business was recession (depression) proof. When times were hard, in the business they said people would always seek entertainment as an escape. It seems, however, according to a study released in April of 1980, that this old homily is—and was always—untrue. During the big depression everything declined, from box office revenues, to employment in the industry, to the number of theatres in the country.

Whether all this is only immediate in effect, or whether it signifies a long term downturn, time will tell, but if one result of this lack of enthusiasm for the blockbusters and other so-called *youth oriented* dreck, is a resurgence of the small, more intimate—whether serious or comic—realistic film, then something will have been gained.

* * *

The last definition of *rhetoric* in my dictionary is "(in classical oratory) the art of influencing the thought and conduct of an audience." As does the written word, film and theatre have their rhetorics, while their manner of presentation, how the effect is achieved, is, broadly, either realism or romance. Where the latter is a work more concerned with action than character (offering means of escape from present reality), the former concerns that which happens according to an author's observation of people. The definition of drama is contrast or

conflict of character and the involvement (interface) between characters and audience is what holds the latter in thrall. Dramatic Realism it's called, a serviceable form, and it has been the artistic point of view many times in history.

Part of this realism thing is (for me) being plainspoken and down to earth. And that an artist's duty is to make comment on the world (understanding that such a comment can be ironic or indirect), saying it out, not hiding it in obscurity (which is different from ambiguity). These days don't I want to see it in the plainest terms—because it's so *complex* and so dangerous? If visual media are the popular form because they are Populist in nature, then artists in those forms should consider carefully what they say.

The trouble is the machinery often gets in the way. When I was working in New York—where, in the '50s and '60s, a number of excellent films were made—we often worked under extreme weather conditions, and how smugly we would say—in Hollywood the cameraman always waits for the sun and the blue sky.

Paterfamilias

Harking back to the Academy Awards—this uneasy mating between movies and TV, two media which bear a certain enmity for each other, which are, in aesthetic, quite different, and compete viciously for the same audience—in light of what kind of dollar numbers are generated by it, would you believe that 3 minutes of commercial time on the TV screen cost *one million* dollars? (Remember—once you could make a whole movie for that!)

It's also interesting to note now that the big winners then were small pictures (and "All That Jazz"), significant in that small pictures might be where it's at now in the business—a portent of things to come. It's also interesting that of the nine nominations for "Apocalypse Now"—which was *not* a small film—the one award it received was for sound.

Certainly one of the more artistic crafts in the movie business (a medium in which all the crafts, in fact, are/or can be made into art), still

sound as art is concerned partly/largely with the reproduction and manipulation of mechanical and electronic impulses. I mean part of the end result is the process of a technology—where objective state-of-the-art perfection is possible to achieve. And that is very different from the subjective manipulation of abstract symbols by writer and director through point of view and craft and art, in story, script, acting, directing.

The film, the camera, recorder, dolly, cranes, lights, trucks, these are hardware, and if you have enough money you can have redundancy in all of it; also you can have no money and have to make do. Working with less means there are limits—limitation, the forgotten rhetoric in production. And among the good reasons for imposing a little of it is that having all the machinery can get in the way of the aesthetic, the director becoming obsessed with using it, and either losing sight of, or blocking out the essence of what a scene is to communicate. Each piece of machinery puts you further from both the actors and the drama. If you don't have the money and so don't have the machinery, then you are really forced to deal with what you're trying to say—you wrestle with it.

Each mechanical trick or illusion puts a distance between the image and the audience; for effect, and rightly so, the trickery of illusion is part of film's art, but there can be too much. I remember we used to say that foreign *Art* films were better—they used hand-held cameras and recorded only a cue track—it was simple for them to make a film—and it was cheap, and the films were good.

Perhaps it could be said that Coppola's \$30-40 Mil epic foundered on the shoals of having everything. Certainly stories enough were circulated to that effect (lunches for the production were catered from Rome), and Eleanor Coppola's book, *Notes*, makes no bones of the excess, and few bones about her husband, Francis. In one entry she writes, "I think Francis truly is a visionary, but part of me is filled with anxiety. I feel as though a certain discrimination is missing, that fine discrimination that draws the line between what is visionary and what is madness. I am terrified." And another entry:

February 25, San Francisco

The *I Ching* said not to rock the boat. I

didn't heed that advice. I sent a telex to Francis telling him that because I loved him, I would tell him what no one else was willing to say, that he was setting up his own Vietnam with his lines of wine and steaks and air conditioners. Creating the very situation he went there to expose. That with his staff of hundreds of people carrying out his every request, he was turning into Kurtz—going too far.

Take "The Black Stallion," from the Omni-Zoetrope Studios, executive producer: Francis Coppola; director: Carroll Ballard (first time in the big time—formerly a cameraman and documentary director/producer responsible for several prize winning and stunningly beautiful short films, "Harvest," "Pigs," "Rodeo").

The film was started in Toronto, continued on a series of beautiful, primitive, and *inaccessible* locations around the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and finished with a shipwreck in *Cinecitta* studios in Rome. They used a Canadian crew and then an Italian crew and separate art directors, all this in what the publicity material describes as a modestly budgeted film—a mere 4.5 million. As it turned out (Murphy's Law) it was a film more fraught with difficult weather, the inaccessibility of the locations, and all the other almost inevitable delays that movie making is heir to.

Then, stretching over a long time, parts were improvised, the script was added to, and it was labored and labored on in its editing. I thought it showed, in spite of the beautiful photography, the fantastic locations, the boy, Kelly Reno's, charm, and Mickey Rooney's finesse—not to mention however many handsome horses stood in for the one. But, most damning, I kept falling into the holes in the story—the gaps in the continuity, as though scenes had been left out.

Right after seeing it, I thought they shot too much. Then they had to put it together in the editing room. Later I heard they did *shoot* five hours of film, and did have to cut it down to two—so obviously things had to be left out, connections disappeared and disparity appeared. And it's a shame because potentially it is such a fine film.

Ruminating about this excess, half the film on the cutting room floor, it is like the stories I heard about what Coppola himself produced in the last tilt in the list. Not-

withstanding the fact that he is one of the top directors in the United States (as well as an award winning writer), his recent effort is bloated and diffuse in its meaning (and I don't mean ambiguous)—suffering from all that production. Also, of course, he has always had a problem with deciding—before the fact—the way the film is going to play out; he shoots it every way and cuts several versions, trying to find out what he's trying to say. With "Apocalypse Now" there was just too much footage, too many alternatives—he lost sight of what he was really saying. On top of that was the dodge of hiding behind all those spectacular effects—and the massive production. The budget was basically limitless—and he was willing to mortgage himself to spend more.

In March Francis Coppola, through his purchase of the old "Hollywood General Studio," completed his grand plan of having his own private major studio, thus following in the heavy footprints of the old line Hollywood moguls. According to news reports (publicity releases) the new place, "Omni-Zoetrope," would be a gathering place for [his] kindred film spirits to work under ideal conditions—a noble goal, in fact.

In an interview that predated this, with Marilyn Beck, published in the San Francisco *Examiner*, November 25, 1979, he waxes eloquent about the future of the place he planned, talking of his "family of filmmakers—with himself as creative godfather . . ." He speaks of the young directors whose careers he's been involved with: Lucas, Scorsese, Spielberg (who, it is to be remembered was responsible for the megabuck \$35 Mil bomb, "1941"). He talks of Michael Cimino who—now, 8 months later, has just completed the shooting of "At Heaven's Gate," which will, it is said, with some attendant United Artists hand-wringing, end up costing \$40 Mil.

His group, according to Coppola, have emerged as the *élite* of the business, cross-fertilize each other's ideas, work on each other's films (the aforementioned Spielberg, at this time, is just starting to direct George Lucas' next epic, "Raiders Of The Lost Ark," shooting an 80-day schedule—very long—on locations in southern France and the rest of the world.)

Considering simply the dollars expended, it can only be assumed

that, like the rest of the industry, Coppola's elite know nothing of the value of limitation. That *not having everything* forces a director to push himself to struggle with presenting the plain materials of his story, not hide behind the intricate State-of-the-Art astronomically expensive (not to mention catering from Rome) hardware. That most insightful director, François Truffaut, made a comment on this as part of his great "Day for Night."

Without limitation can there be art?

One of the Boys

"I don't think of myself as an artist. I was at a film conference once and the word film-maker was used, and George Cukor said: 'I hate the word *film-maker*, it's like watch-maker, conjures up the image of a little craftsman bent over a table.' Well, that's the way I am, that's my whole nature. I am a film-maker. I enjoy and have always enjoyed putting things together . . ."

—George Lucas (1969)

Back then, previous to the shooting of his first feature picture, "THX 1138"—an American Zoetrope production, Executive Producer, Francis Coppola—I interviewed George Lucas. Now, eleven years later, in the light of today, it is interesting to look at some things he said then, remembering that that first picture, although almost immediately a cult success, was a commercial debacle by industry standards (which took both George and Francis something to come back from). While the most recently released blockbuster, "The Empire Strikes Back," is one of the few pictures to be making money this summer—open about 8 weeks it has grossed one hundred and eighteen million, three hundred and ten thousand, five hundred and sixty-eight dollars.

"Empire"—the second picture of the middle trilogy, one of three trilogies, is number two out of a total of nine pictures that Lucas expects will take 20 years to complete. A triumph by the same industry standards, a monumental box-office success, it will eventually gross untold millions, not to mention the take from commercial tie-ins, the Darth Vader and R2D2 figures, the T-shirts, comic books and funny hats. But, like its predecessor "Star Wars," it is a *romance*—a work more concerned with action than with

character (offering an escape from and not a confrontation with reality). Dramatic realism these pictures certainly are not.

In his review in *Newsweek* David Anson wrote that both pictures "conspicuously lack: story (as opposed to action), characters (as opposed to cartoon figures) and any real emotional resonance . . . the actors barely leave a trace on the screen . . . but I left both movies in a state closer to exhaustion than exhilaration, impressed by the means but dubious about the ends."

In my conversation with Lucas in 1969—talking about what "THX" appeared to be, how its characters were representations of ideas, how the mechanical nature of their society was a symbol, how mechanically the picture would be manipulated—I asked him what about a picture that's about *emotions*. And he answered: "I couldn't make that kind of movie; it's not in me. . . . My films will probably always be made primarily in the edit-

ing . . . constructing on the moviola. . . ."

In an interview by Joanne Williams, published in the local weekly *Pacific Sun*, February, 1980—the first time in a long time, according to the author, that the obsessively private Lucas had agreed to talk to anybody—it is amazing to see how consistent his views have remained. It's like proof that having-a-life-plan-and-sticking-to-it brings success; a text book case of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

In 1969 he talked of his possible entry into the big time, the final goal being able to go back and make small films. "I don't know whether I am going to like the larger structure or not. I naturally tend away from it because I like to work with as few complications as possible and every person becomes something you have to deal with because they are another human being. . . you don't want to spend a lot of time relating to people . . . which is why I like making film

If Not with a Bang, Certainly with a Whimper!

Almost by accident I saw a film at the Mill Valley Library in early July. I came away from it shaken. "The Medical Implications of Nuclear Energy" is a plainly stated laundry list of terrors, delivered by "a talking head," Helen Caldicott, M.D., President, Physicians for Social Responsibility (which she founded), Associate for Medicine, Children's Hospital.

What she advocates, this charming fresh-faced matter-of-fact woman, is total Nuclear Weapons Disarmament, a Moratorium on the Construction of Nuclear Power Plants, a Phased Withdrawal of Existing Plants, and a Comprehensive Program to Conserve Energy and Develop Alternative Sources of Energy—which do exist.

How she supports this radical thesis is on film, in a laying out of unthinkable facts (which, at times, are somehow humorous), exposing the lies and prevarications coming from the nuclear industry, the NRC, and the big utility conglomerates. She talks of Three Mile Island and you will become afraid. She says, "the geneticists say we don't have to worry about the effects of genetic disease over 50 to 100 human generations because plutonium (the automatic by-product of nuclear plants, and the basis for weapons) is so carcinogenic that we'll probably die of malignancy, most of us, before that time."

The film, presented by the Abalone Alliance, the San Francisco Bay Area anti-nuclear group—brother organization to the east-coast Clamshell Alliance—is 38 minutes long, in 16 MM; inquiries about it should be directed to:

Safe Energy Education
Box 5132
Ojai, Ca 93023

It is also available on video tape. It should be seen!

—L.S.

all by myself. It's me and the material, me and the movie and nothing in between. In the end I will go back toward the smaller kind of movies. . . just to be able to take a camera and one other guy, a sound man, and the two of us go out. . . ."

* * *

It's the '80s and he's here in the future, the larger structure, explaining how his films are business ventures, designed to appeal to the mass audience, designed to make a profit (certainly the show business of America is still *business*). Having cleared \$12 Mil (after taxes) on "Star Wars," with "Empire" money beginning to pour in, he still plans to do personal films, what he calls "my little movies . . . the kind of thing I used to do in film school, the things local Cinematheque people do. . . they're non-story, non-linear, a different way of looking at things. Pure film. They're shown to people at colleges, film societies and art museums."

George Lucas is one of the boys who knows his own limitations for sure. And he doesn't have to care about the excess of technique that obscures meaning—he thrives on that. It's what his films are all about. And perhaps it's better to make no pretense to being more than entertainment. If the artist's *duty* is to make comment on the world, George Lucas said he's no artist. But he is, of course, and needs to establish significance for what he does. Puritan-like, there's got to be something there other than money and technique.

Speaking to that question Ms. Williams asked if he believed his movies contributed to a better world? He talked of being a student of anthropology "and feeling strongly about the role that myths and fairy tales play in setting up young people for the way they're supposed to handle themselves in society . . . As families begin to break up, kids are left more to television and they don't hear bed-time stories. . . . As a result, people are learning their mythology from TV, which makes them very confused because it has no point of view, no sense of morality. . . . So when I developed 'Star Wars' I did it as a contemporary fairy tale. I think that's one of the reasons it has universal appeal."

"Then 'Star Wars' is a morality play?"

"It's also a psychological tool that children can use to understand the world better and their place in it and how to adjust to that. It's very basic. It's where religion came from. Fairytales, religion, all were designed to teach man the right way to live and give him a moral anchor."

* * *

As is evident, these films don't appeal to me—*my* Puritan conscience—because they are romance and simplistic and if, as George says, kids now are tuned to tv, to visuals, then what's only black and white in his films doesn't say anything to the kids or the kid in me, and we need to be taught complexity. Fantastic his films truly are, no one can fault their technical expertise, *but* with that one understands in film that there is that part of it, the mechanical increment, the objective and state-of-the-art perfection. "Star Wars," and "The Empire Strikes Back" are not mythic.

The reason that myths work, that they have universal and timeless ap-

peal, is because the humans in them are very human indeed—we can relate one to one. And the conflicts, human vs. human vs. god (and any variation thereof), are similar to our conflicts. Recognizing that is why the effects of these stories are long-lived. The abstraction of Sisyphus at his futile stubborn task means something because you can feel next to the man, under the stone, and see up the mountain. In the Greek myths the gods themselves have very human characteristics. So they can fling thunderbolts and turn themselves into swans and people into swine, but behind all this process and technical expertise, the motives—jealousy, envy, greed—are human.

Without characters, can you have myth? Without characters you have the black hats against the white hats and it's a simplistic morality play—the problem is that most everything these days is various shades of grey.

The enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend.

—Lawrence Sturhahn

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Contributing Editor Leo J. Hertz

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The National Magazine Awards Foundation congratulates the winners of awards for excellence in the third annual Magazine Awards program. Individual magazine writers, photographers, illustrators and art directors compete in seventeen awards categories and receive \$1,000 golden scroll awards or \$500 silver scroll awards for second place. This year there were 1,600 entries of work appearing in eighty-two Canadian magazines. The awards program is bilingual and was adjudicated by seventy-five English- or French-speaking judges from Charlottetown, P.E.I., to Victoria, B.C., assembled in specialized juries. The Directors of the Foundation also give awards for outstanding achievement each year by Canadian magazines.

The winners are:

University of Western Ontario President's Medal Awards for General Magazine Articles: **Gold:** Barry Callaghan, 'Albert Schweitzer's Dark Continent', Weekend Magazine; Jacques Keable, 'D'égal à égal sur la Côte-Nord', Québec Science; **Silver:** Robert Collins, 'God Can Bring Good Out Of It', Reader's Digest; Monique de Gramont, 'La Révolution de Pithiviers', Châtelaine; Micheline Carrier, 'La Pornographie Galapante', Châtelaine.

Toronto Dominion Bank Awards for Humour: Allan Fotheringham, 'The Bland Leading the Bland', Maclean's; **Silver:** Serge Grenier, 'Goodbye Ottawa Bonjour', L'Actualité.

Mutual Life of Canada Awards for Business Writing: Yves Taschereau, 'Un Casino Nommé Québec', L'Actualité; **Silver:** Diane Pullan Wilson, 'Harlequin: A Corporate Romance', Quill & Quire.

RBW Awards for Science and Technology: Pierre Sormany, 'La Vraie Nature de la Fusion', Québec Science; **Silver:** Linda Rosenbaum, 'Does Progress Cause Cancer', Canadian Business.

Molson Awards for Canadian Sports Writing: Michael Posner, 'Portrait of a Whole Man', Weekend Magazine; **Silver:** Réjean Tremblay, 'Serge Savard, Inc.', L'Actualité.

Abitibi-Price Awards for Politics: Sandra Gwyn, 'Hanging Out With Hatfield', Saturday Night; **Silver:** Charles Taylor, 'Inside the New Republic', Weekend Magazine; Benoît Aubin, 'Le Vrai Joe Clark veut-il se lever s'il vous plaît', L'Actualité.

Canada Packers Awards for Agriculture: Dick Brown, 'The Other Stock Market', Financial Post Magazine; **Silver:** Michel Saint-Germain, 'Les Vaches Bioniques', L'Actualité.

McClelland and Stewart Awards for Fiction: Marian Engel, 'Father Instinct', Châtelaine; **Silver:** Audrey Thomas, 'Harry and Violet', Saturday Night.

du Maurier Awards for Poetry: Michael Ondaatje, 'Campion: Sri Lanka', The Canadian Forum; **Silver:** Earle Birney, 'Deer Hunt', Toronto Life.

Foundation Awards for Culture: Silver Donald Cameron, 'Farley Mowat, Prophet', Atlantic Insight; **Silver:** Jacques Godbout, 'Gabrielle Roy, Notre-Dame des Bouleaux', L'Actualité.

Air Canada Awards for Travel: Alden Nowlan, 'Cuba is a Great Place to Visit', Atlantic Insight; **Silver:** Benoît Aubin, 'Le Nombri du Canada', L'Actualité.

Dominion Textile Awards for Fashion Features: Michael McKerhen & Sandra Rowan-Legg & Charlotte Empey, 'Stop Em Dead Red', Flare; **Silver:** Marina Sturza & Michel Gontran, 'Night Magic', City Woman.

Seagram Awards for Magazine Illustration: Roger Hill, 'The Loan Shark', Quest; **Silver:** Roger Hill, 'Deutsch Treat', The Canadian.

Kodak Canada Awards for Studio Photography: Gilean Proctor, 'King Tut Fashions', The City; **Silver:** Jeremiah Chechik, 'Damned Delightful', Toronto Life.

Foundation Awards for Photojournalism: Dilip Mehta, 'Bangkok', Toronto Life; **Silver:** Nigel Dickson, 'Cardinal Leger at 75', Weekend Magazine.

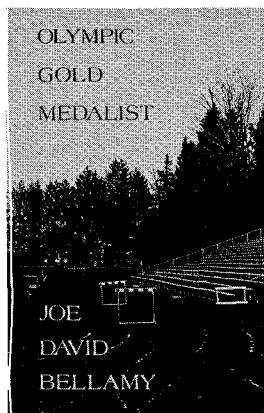
Allan R. Fleming/MacLaren Awards for Art Direction: Robert Priest, 'China at 30', Weekend Magazine; **Silver:** Georges Haroutiun, 'Loneliness', Homemaker's.

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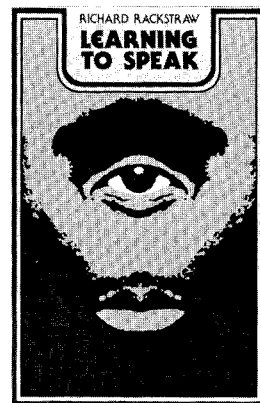


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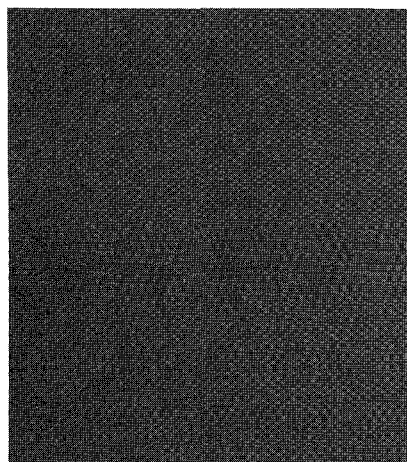
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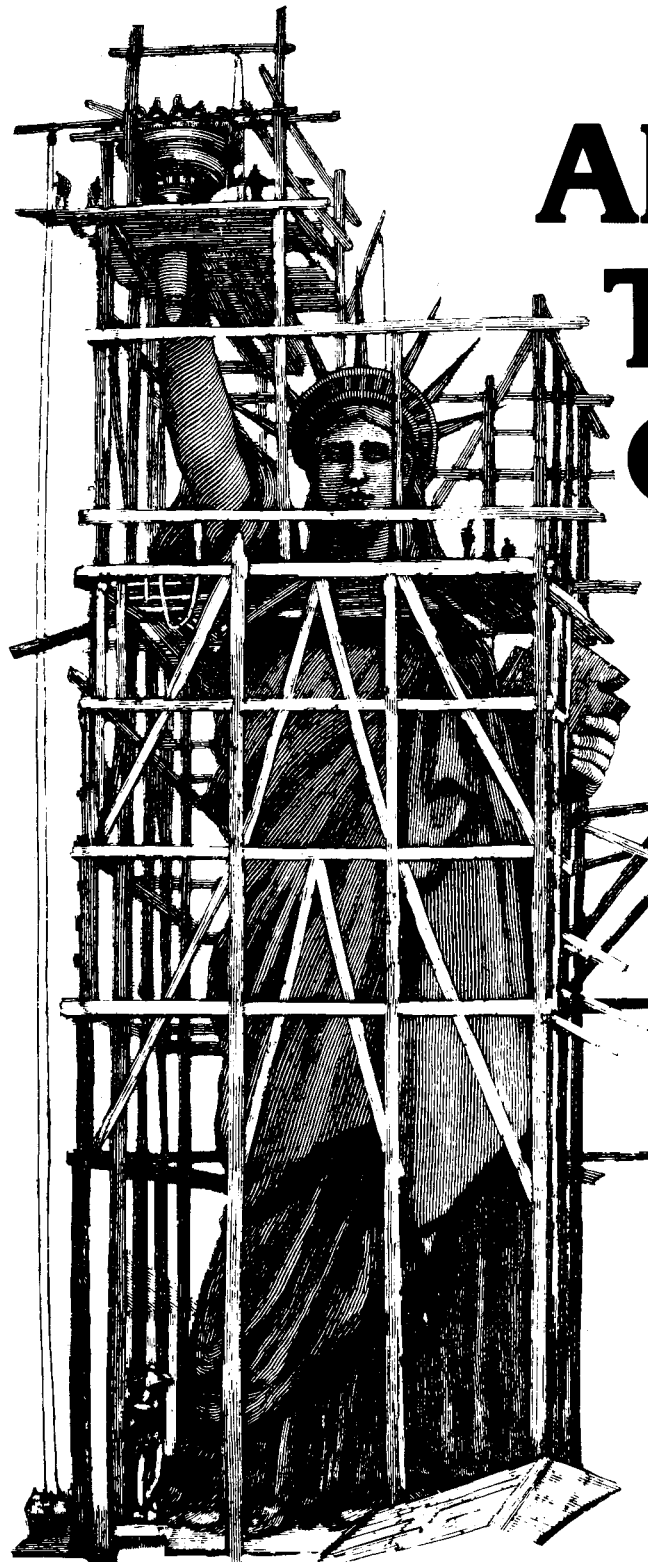
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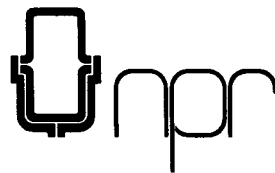


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